

Mindful Colouring Christmas ~ “God who is with us”

As we light this candle
And ring the bell
We pray that God is with us this day.

Close your eyes
Place your hand on your belly. Notice your breathe as your belly moves.
Breathe in through your nose and out
Through your mouth.
Breathe in and breathe and out
Repeat for 1 minutes.

Invite participants to begin colouring



Gospel - Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL - Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reflection

This is one of the accounts of the birth of Jesus. In our modern scientific eyes, we can get hung up on the virginity of Mary. Sadly, over centuries of theology around sexuality that placed sex somehow lesser than celibacy. We can now see from a more wholistic age that both sex and marriage and celibacy are both holy and healthy pathways of life. But rather, this Gospel focuses on the person of Jesus Christ. Matthew starts his Gospel with a complete lineage of the ancestors of Jesus. Christians believe that Jesus is the "son of God". Thus, the virgin birth is to explain who Jesus is. Jesus is God. Because Jesus is God, God did not need to be created. Mary's virginity is a statement of identity of who is Jesus. Furthermore, for us today, the same question arises. Who is Jesus? Is Jesus simply a historical figure. Or is Jesus something more than a person who lived 2000 years ago? This raises further questions like "Did Jesus rise from the dead" and "is Jesus alive today"? Science cannot answer these questions. But through a different path through faith. For Joseph he too lacked faith. Joseph wanted to divorce Mary. Paradoxically this doubt is a good thing. Because in doubt we begin asking questions more than what we can see on the surface. More than what seems obvious. More than science. Through our questioning and our faith, and trusting, we come to a deeper reality of who Jesus is.

Silent Reflection

Silently reflect on the today's gospel and its meaning for us today. Reflect on the questions for reflection.

Discussion

1. Who is Jesus? How do you know?
2. What role does science, faith and tradition play?
3. Why is doubt important?
4. The angel gave Joseph a message - What role do other people play?
5. Does - "Who God is change?"

Prayers of the faithful

1. Dear God, May we look for signs in our ordinary life of the presence of God. Give us a faith which looks beyond science and what seems obvious to the deeper truth. May learn to trust more. Lord hear us.

ALL - Lord hear our prayer.

2. Dear God, We thank you for our times of doubting. May we ask deeper questions which encounter new ways of understanding.

ALL - Lord hear our prayer.

3. Dear God, We thank you for sending Jesus Christ as a fragile and vulnerable baby. May our own vulnerability and fragility teach us your ways.

ALL - Lord hear our prayer.

4. Dear God, We pray for places in our world where there is conflict. Conflict in our hearts. Conflict in our families. And conflict in war zones like in Ukraine, Gaza, Armenia and Burma. Christ send us your peace.

ALL - Lord hear our prayer.

5. Are there any other prayer?

ALL - Lord hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

Let us pray, Loving Father, In the quiet of our hearts, we reflect upon the birth of Jesus, as told in Matthew's Gospel. Just as Joseph accepted Mary into his home, embracing the divine mystery with faith and love, may we too welcome Your presence into the corners of our lives.

Grant us the grace to trust in Your guiding Spirit, to respond to Your call with righteousness and courage, as Joseph did. May we recognize Jesus, Emmanuel, as the Saviour in our midst, teaching us to love without condition or hesitation.

We ask for the intercession of Mary, our mother, to bear our prayers to You, as she bore the Saviour to the world. Help us to emulate her obedience and Joseph's unwavering faith as we walk our own paths of discipleship.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.