

INTRO

Reflecting on last week's practice, were you able to create spaces of silence and build in moments of expectation? If so, how did it go?

IDEA 1

The annunciation carries with it both an opportunity to rejoice and an openness to authentic questions and uncertainties that life can bring. It is a reminder of how we receive it all as part of our story. It's an invitation to embrace the chaos and beauty, and disruption that is our lives.

In this season of advent, what is the thing that you're rejoicing about that God has provided?

What is something new that stood out to you from reading the Annunciation of Mary story? Imagery? Emotion? Idea etc.

How does the hope of Jesus speak to both Mary's and our questions, uncertainties, and disruption in life?

IDEA 2

Our invitation is much the same - to face our fear, struggle, diagnosis - that insecurity, anxiety, or doubt with the Favor we walk in as Children of the King. The words of Gabriel are our hope as well - "***The Lord is with you, do not be afraid.***" An invitation to enter into the messiness mixed up with the joy - and walk forward with trust - An invitation to receive the comfort, the security - to hang onto the presence and the promise.

What do you think it means to walk in the favor of being Children of the King?

In this story, what do you believe is the fear that Gabriel is speaking to in Mary?

What are the fears, questions, and disruptions you're carrying this advent season?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

In the rhythm of Advent, we as believers sit with expectation and anticipation of God's promise, peace, and presence. As you reflect as a group on the questions, disruptions, and doubts you carry, consider praying as a group this petition prayer. Let it be a representation of the Hope for this year and the age to come:

Advent Petition Prayer

Come, long-expected Jesus.

Excite in us a wonder at the wisdom and power you embody. Receive our prayers.

Come, long-expected Jesus.

Excite in us a hunger for peace: peace in the world, peace in our homes, peace in ourselves.

Hear our hearts.

Come, long-expected Jesus.

Excite in us a joy fueled by the perfect community found in the Trinity.

Guide our steps.

Come, long-expected Jesus.

Excite in us the love and peace brought to earth in Jesus' birth.

Be our hope.

In the promise of the Son, the love of the Father, and the peace of the Holy Spirit we pray.

NEXT STEPS

"Do you have eyes to see.....especially in this season of busyness....in this world of rational thinking. Throughout the years God has graciously sent "angel visitants" to take away the dimness of our souls, to protect, to awaken us to where He is at work, and to bring comfort. Some of us have our own stories, and this may be a season where you share in that wonder, weirdness and beauty."

It may be that for some in your group, the unseen realms of God's activity may be common, new, or even non-existent. For some, even unbelief. Allow this week to either share your stories or receive the stories of your community where God's supernatural activity was revealed.