

Wednesday

Read Luke 1: 41b-42 *Elizabeth blesses Mary and Jesus*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why is this very early connection between John and Jesus important to the story? To you?*
2. *Imagine the meeting of these two women, one old, one young, each carrying a surprising child, etc. What would you have said to them if you were there?*

Prayer Focus As the Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth, fill us, too, Redeemer, with the joy of your daring plan for our salvation. Help us not to be fearful of speaking your blessing to those who need to hear it today.

Thursday

Read Luke 1:43-44 *Elizabeth's child responds*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why does Elizabeth wonder that Mary came to her?*
2. *Do you feel a sense of excitement about Jesus today? Give thanks for that gift of connection.*

Prayer Focus Gracious God, we sometimes ask “Why me?” when things are hard or baffling. Help us learn to ask “Why NOT me?” May we ask again, “Why me?” when we think of how much you have given, and lift our voices in joy.

Friday

Read Luke 1:45 *Elizabeth sees Jesus as God's gift*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *How do you think Mary felt about Elizabeth's three blessings?*
2. *What last blessing would you offer to others as Advent draws to a close? What will you take away from these last weeks?*

Prayer Focus Thank you for the gift of Advent, Holy One, and the time to ponder your promises to us and our promises to you. We again commit ourselves to believe in your saving work and prepare us to be part of fulfilling your redeeming plan.

The Gifts of Christmas

Pastor's message: Luke 1:39-45. The gifts of Christmas are movement, excitement, and fulfillment.

Message Notes:

Small Group Format

Welcome

- Introductions/getting acquainted
- Mutual Invitation question: *What truth/message/reassurance have you received this Advent? Why is it special to you this year?*

Opening Prayer

Song (optional)

Reflection on Scripture

Have someone read: **Luke 1:39-45**

- Discuss observations about the text
 - *What word or phrase strikes you the most?*
 - *What do you think is the most important point of the text?*

Application of Scripture (The central transformative questions)

- What did you hear God say to you through this week's Scriptures?
- What are you doing about it?
- How can we support you?

Share your faith (in groups of 3)

- *How have you experienced God recently in your life?* (This is a weekly question - it may be difficult to answer at first, but if you ask it each week you may start to notice God more in your life.)

Pray for each other

Refreshments (optional)



THE GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS December 19, 2021

Monday

Read Luke 1:39-40 *Mary hurries to see Elizabeth*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why did Mary go to visit Elizabeth?*
2. *An angel told Elizabeth and Zechariah to expect a child despite their age. Why do you think God chose them to bear John the Baptist?*

Prayer Focus God, give us faith to see where you are at work, even when we can't see all you're doing. Bless us with people who can understand and support us. Shape us in your love to be the ones who offer understanding and support to others.

Tuesday

Read Luke 1:41a *John responds to Jesus*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Feeling the baby jump inside her must have been exciting for Elizabeth. What meanings did this "leaping" have for her?*
2. *Reflect on what God might be growing in your heart, or your spirit in this last week of Advent.*

Prayer Focus Let our hearts leap up with joy at the fresh start this season brings, the new chance to live in your light once again. As we draw closer to Christmas, Beloved, let us look to see and share the joy of your greatest gift, Jesus Christ.