



A Mini Retreat for Youth ▫ 45 – 55 minutes  
Leader's Edition for Large Families or Groups

This mini Advent retreat for families and large groups focuses on Mary as a guide. It includes prayer, Bible reading, meditation, sharing, and skits, all aimed at preparing for the Advent Season.

Due to the inclusion of skits, this is offered only as a group retreat and not solo.

**Instructions For Your Family Retreat —**

- ◆ Make copies of the retreat for each family member, or as you see fit.
- ◆ Make a copy of this sheet and cut it on the lines for each skit.
- ◆ The leader has one part and will need to organize the retreat.
- ◆ There needs to be four readers, or two that read twice.
- ◆ Items needed: One Catholic Bible is needed or a smart phone/tablet for readings, along with props that can be used for the skits. Please read each of the five skit ideas and select accordingly.
- ◆ The retreat is for adults through school age, but younger children may enjoy it as well.
- ◆ The duration of 45-55 minutes depends on how much time it takes to answer, meditate the questions, complete the skits, etc. Please allow accordingly.
- ◆ A break may be taken, if needed, at any time.

**Instructions For A Large Group or Large Family Retreat —**

- ◆ Make copies of the retreat for each member, or as you see fit.
- ◆ Make a copy of this sheet and cut it on the lines for each skit.
- ◆ The leader has one part and will need to organize the retreat.
- ◆ There needs to be four readers, or two that read twice.
- ◆ Items needed: One Catholic Bible is needed or a smart phone/tablet for readings, along with props that can be used for the skits. Please read each of the five skit ideas and select accordingly.
- ◆ The retreat is for adults through school age, but younger children may enjoy it as well.
- ◆ For the skits, separate the group into five smaller groups and assign each group a one of the five categories listed. Have them prepare and when all of the groups are ready have them perform their skit in front of the other groups. For example: The group that has #1 The Annunciation of Mary performs first and so on.
- ◆ The duration of 45-55 minutes depends on how much time it takes to answer, meditate the questions, complete the skits, etc. Please allow accordingly.
- ◆ A break may be taken, if needed, at any time.

**Gratitude —**

Thank you for choosing to do this mini family retreat. Your willingness to set aside time for reflection, prayer, and personal growth as a family is a true gift to be shared. May this Advent journey bring you renewed peace, deeper insight, and a sense of spiritual refreshment.

## 1. The Annunciation of Mary —

Luke 1:26-38 — Announcement of the Birth of Jesus

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,\* and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"\*

And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived\* a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.



## 2. The Annunciation to Saint Joseph

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 be with child 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.



## 3. Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth aka The Visitation

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord\* should come to me?"

For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed\* that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

#### 4. Travel 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem to find a room

The journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem was prompted by a decree/ruling from Caesar Augustus for a census, requiring Joseph to travel from Nazareth to his ancestral town (where he was born) of Bethlehem. This journey of approximately 90 miles was extremely difficult because Mary was 8 ½ months pregnant, difficult terrain, and potential dangers, and they traveled by donkey or on foot over several days to fulfill the requirement and for the birth of Jesus.

Once they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph found no room in the inn because of too many people having to return. The innkeeper, seeing their desperate situation, offered them the stable, which was likely a cave used to house animals.



#### 5. The Nativity

Since there was no room at the inn, an innkeeper, seeing their desperate situation, offered Joseph and Mary the stable, which was likely a cave used to house animals. It was not the perfect place, but it was out of the elements, and they made it work. So, the nativity, the birth of Jesus, occurred in humble surroundings. Please read below for the highlights:

- **The birth:** Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and because there was no room in the inn, he was laid in a manger.
- **The announcement to shepherds:** The birth was announced by an angel to shepherds who were tending their flocks outside the city.
- **The visit of the Magi:** The Gospel of Matthew mentions the visit of wise men from the east who followed a star to find the newborn Jesus. Over time, they came to be depicted as kings bringing gifts, and are sometimes shown representing different ages or continents.
- **The Nativity scene:** Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus in the manger, and often include shepherds and the three wise men.