

# **My Catholic Faith! Study Group**

## **Session 3 - Jesus and His Blessed Mother**

### **Pre-meeting Prep**

Participants should be asked to read Chapter Three of the *My Catholic Faith!* book prior to this meeting.

### **5 minutes - Gather**

Snacks and informal social time as people gather. Try to be punctual and gather everyone together no longer than 5 minutes after the scheduled starting time.

### **5 minutes - Opening prayer and Scripture**

Everyone sits quietly as the leader begins with the Sign of the Cross and then invites a period of silence in the following way:

***Let us quiet ourselves as we begin this study of our glorious Catholic faith together. "Lord, as we sit here for a minute in silence, help each one of us to bring our own questions, concerns, fears, and joys to You. Help us, in this moment of silence, to be attentive to Your gentle voice speaking to us, directing us, and calling us to a deeper faith."***

Take about a minute in silence with eyes closed so that each person can speak to our Lord about their own particular cares and concerns.

Leader reads the following invitation: ***Let us ponder the Word of God. Let us reflect upon our own faith journey with the following questions: Do I believe? How deep is my faith? Am I open to letting God speak to me? Am I open to the Word of God and willing to let God's truth sink in more deeply? Am I willing to let this new faith change my life?***

The leader of the session prayerfully reads the following Scriptures, one at a time, pausing for about 30 seconds between each verse:

Galatians 4:4-5: But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Luke 1:26-38: 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.

Acts 16:16-18: As we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl with an oracular spirit, who used to bring a large profit to her owners through her fortune-telling. She began to follow Paul and us, shouting, "These people are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." She did this for many days. Paul became annoyed, turned, and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." Then it came out at that moment.

Matthew 16:13-16: When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:16-13: The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying, "Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?" But he was silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, "Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?" Then Jesus answered, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.'"

Leader then says: ***Let us take a moment in silence to reflect upon these words.*** (a minute of silence)

The leader then prays the Angelus:

***V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.***

***R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.***

***Hail Mary, etc.***

***V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.***

***R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.***

***Hail Mary, etc.***

***V. And the Word was made Flesh.***

**R. And dwelt among us.**

***Hail Mary, etc.***

**V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.**

**R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.**

**LET US PRAY**

***Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.***

The prayer time concludes with everyone professing the Apostles' Creed:

***I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.***

#### **45-50 minutes - Discussion questions**

Each person should be invited to share something or ask a question, if he/she chooses, regarding the questions/discussion starters below. Go through one question at a time, and give each person an opportunity to say something if he/she chooses. Avoid having one or two persons dominate the discussion. Go around the circle and do not be afraid to share! Your insights might assist someone else in their understanding of the topics. Your question might very well be the same question that someone else has. Some of the questions below will invite a personal sharing; other questions will invite you to share with others what you read in Chapter Three. The goal is to share personally and to also make sure that the faith of our Church is clearly expressed and understood by all.

1. If someone who had never heard of Jesus asked you about Him, what would you say? How would you describe who He is?
2. When we profess our faith in Christ, we profess our faith in a Person. We do not just profess faith in the concepts of Jesus, we profess our faith in Him. What does that mean?
3. What are the effects in our lives of professing our faith in Jesus?
4. The name "Jesus" means "God saves." How do you understand salvation? How is it that God, in the person of Christ Jesus, saves us?

5. Imagine you were one of Jesus' disciples. How would you wrap your mind around the fact that this man is also the Creator of the Universe, in union with the Father and Holy Spirit? Do you believe that this man is also the Creator of everything?
6. Couldn't He have saved us another way? Did He really have to be born of the Virgin Mary? Did He have to become a little child? A poor child? Be raised like any other child? Learn to walk and talk? Grow and mature? Did He really have to become one of us sharing all parts of our lives?
7. What are the results of God becoming man? What does this do to and for us? How are our lives affected by this act?
8. What does it mean when we say Jesus was 100% God and 100% human?
9. Discuss and explain what a "preservative grace" is.
10. What's the difference between saying that Mary was immaculately conceived, and that she is The Immaculate Conception?
11. Why do we call Mary the Mother of God rather than the Mother of Jesus? What are some objections people of other Christian faiths might have to us calling Mary the "Mother of God?" Is that an appropriate title?
12. Why was it essential that Mary was a virgin mother? And why was it essential that she be the mother of only one child?
13. Share any questions or concerns you have regarding devotion to Mary. Try to be open to new ideas on devotion and total consecration to her.

**(optional) 5 minutes:**

Leader reads Chapter 1, numbers 14-21 from St. Louis de Montfort's "Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin"

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/treatise-on-true-devotion-to-the-blessed-virgin-6064>

**20 minutes - Final Reflections and sharing**

If you read the selection from St. Louis de Monfort, go around and give each person an opportunity to share their thoughts on what he say. If you did not have time for that reading, invite everyone to share what might have stood out the most to them from the discussion of the night (day) or what left them the most confused, so as to gain further clarity or insight from others.

**5 minutes - Closing prayer**

Leader begins with the Sign of the Cross and invites a minute of silence with all eyes closed. Each person should reflect upon what was discussed tonight (today), especially what stood out to him/her the most.

Leader then prays the following prayer:

***God our Father, we thank You for the gift of Jesus, Your Son. Thank you for sending Him to take on our fallen human nature. Jesus, my Lord, thank You for uniting Yourself with me in my fallenness and for becoming for me the way back to the Father. Help me to fully profess my faith in You every day.***

***Mother Mary, your perfect yes was the perfect response to the will of God. Through your prayers, help me to always imitate that “yes” in my daily life.***

***Lord, if there are questions that have been left unanswered tonight (today), please speak to us in Your own way and in Your own time. If there are answers that were given to us tonight (today) that You desire we share with others, give us the courage, wisdom, and love we need to share this faith in accord with Your will.***

***Jesus, we do believe in You; help us when our faith wavers and is weak. Strengthen us to know and love You in a more perfect way each and every day. Jesus, I trust in You.***

Leader then invites everyone present to offer their own prayer in the following way (Note: This can be done out loud, but it might be preferable if it's done in silence at the discretion of the leader):

***Let us now each bring our own personal concerns before our Lord, trusting that He hears us and knows all we need. Let us entrust these prayers to Him with full confidence that He desires to take control.*** (Take a minute of silence for each person to speak to God about their own personal needs for the night or day).

Leader then invites everyone to close with the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.