



Diocese of Charleston Young Adult Ministry

# Advent Study

# Introduction

Many of us recognize the Gospel reading from the book of Matthew describing the genealogy of Jesus. The extensive list and predominantly unfamiliar names can make this passage seem dull. The Office of Young Adult Ministry would like you to use this study during this Advent season to challenge that.

Advent is a season of joyful preparation for the coming of our Lord and what an excellent way to prepare our very human hearts for Him by diving into the lives of His very human ancestors.

## How to use this study

There are 2 particular goals of this study:

- 1) Learning how to read and pray with scripture as a community
- 2) Drawing connections between the Old Testament, New Testament, and contemporary personal faith.

This study should be used as a guide to help you plan and organize as a leader, as well as mediate the challenge of tackling scripture in the context of a young adult ministry study. You are given pages to reflect and write, as well as ideas and tips for planning for your ministry. Prayer and the sacraments are at the foundation of fruitful ministry, but keep in mind that each of us is given specific gifts to use for the glory of God. Do not be afraid to be creative in planning to meet the better meet the needs of the young adults you are leading.

## What this study includes

- I. 4 Week Scripture Study: 3 weeks of Advent and 1 week in the Christmas Season
- II. Tips for leaders on How to Lead
- III. Lectio Divina Handouts
- IV. Sheets for Leader Preparation for Study
- V. Ideas for Advent Events
- VI. Guide for Planning and Organizing Events
- VII. ABC's of Ministry Events
- VIII. How to Lead a Day Retreat + Sample Schedule

# WEEK 1 ADVENT STUDY: RUTH

## PREPARATION FOR LEADERS

Spend time doing *Lectio Divina* with the Book of Ruth before study

Watch the "The Unpleasant Ancestors of Christmas"

## WATCH

"The Unpleasant Ancestors of Christmas"-

Fr. Mike Schmitz  
Ascension Presents

\*Make sure you are connected to the internet and the video is loaded before the study starts! \*

## BREAKDOWN

**After you've watched the video...**

Read through the following passages in Ruth

**Offer quiet time for prayer and processing..**

Depending on the size of your study, break into small groups

## QUESTIONS

**What sticks out to you the most in these passages?**

**What does Ruth's obedience and sacrifice to Naomi say to you?**

**How does Ruth's obedience and sacrifice connect to the Virgin Mary's?**

**How do you see being joyful and obedient as freedom?**

## FOCUS

*Connect to our own lives*

Where have you been obedient/ made a sacrifice in your own life?

*Connecting to the New Testament*

How is the Ruth similar to the Blessed Mother in joyful obedience?

## CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK

**Find an opportunity to be joyfully obedient this week in something that would normally lead you to complain or argue. Be prepared to share next week what that was.**

# Leader Preparation



## Icebreaker for the week

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### Lectio Divina

*Read through the passage silently without marking anything*

*Read through it again and note what stands out to you*  
**Words or Phrases that stuck out to me in the passage**

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**Lectio:** What does the text say that everyone should understand?

**Meditatio:** What does it say to me, today, about my life?

**Oratio:** What can I say in response to the Lord?

**Contemplatio:** What conversion of the mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking?

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**What would I like the group to get out of this?**

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# Leader Preparation



**Other questions I would like to  
discuss**

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# WEEK 2 ADVENT STUDY: JACOB

## PREPARATION FOR LEADERS

**Spend time in Lectio Divina with the Genesis 32:23-33**  
**Read Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI Reflection on Jacob**

## BREAKDOWN

### After your icebreaker...

Ask your group to share how the challenge for the week went, why they chose that particular opportunity, and how they were able to overcome complaint or argument

*"Find an opportunity to be joyfully obedient in something that would normally lead you to complain and or argue"*

### Open in prayer and read Genesis 32:23-33

### After you read the scripture...

Ask the group what stuck out to them in this passage

### THEN

Read the Reflection from Benedict XVI

## QUESTIONS

**How do you connect Jacob to Jesus' ministry based on the reflection from Benedict XVI?**

**How did Jesus do his ministry here on earth?**

**How did he specifically build relationships?**

## REFLECTION

"KNOWING SOMEONE'S NAME IMPLIES A KIND OF POWER OVER THAT PERSON, BECAUSE IN BIBLICAL MENTALITY THE NAME CONTAINS THE MOST PROFOUND REALITY OF THE OTHER PERSON. IT REVEALS THE PERSON'S SECRET AND DESTINY...IT IS A FORM OF SURRENDER, A TOTAL HANDING OVER OF SELF TO THE OTHER"

-BENEDICT XVI IN A GENERAL AUDIENCE

## FOCUS

*Connect to our own lives*

How are you going to connect Jacob's wrestle with God to our own?

*Connect to the New Testament*

Why is it so important to know people's names and enter into their lives?

## CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK

**Introduce yourself to someone new in ministry or at Church. Remember their name and take a few moments to get to know them.**

# Leader Preparation



## Icebreaker for the week

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# Leader Preparation



**Other questions I would like to  
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# ADVENT STUDY WEEK 3: DAVID

## PREPARATION FOR LEADERS

**Spend time in Lectio Divina with 2 Samuel 6: 12-23**

**Read through the "Faith Formation" Section**

## BREAKDOWN

**After your icebreaker...**

Ask your group to share how the challenge for the week went, what led them to choose the particular person they chose to introduce themselves to, and if they followed up or plan to.

**Open in prayer and read 2 Samuel 6:12-23**

\*Michal's reaction to David's dancing comes from her idea of how a king should act. David rejects this and says he does not need instruction from the house of a failed king.

**After you read the scripture...**

## QUESTIONS

**What were you struck by in this passage?**

**David's dancing for joy seems almost bizarre. Where do you and how often do you actually celebrate and share true joy in God?**

**Have there been moments in your life where you have expressed joy for God in a countercultural way?**

## REFLECTION

Consider the life of David. He killed Goliath, he was the king of Israel and Judah, he was a great warrior, but he was also a great sinner. He committed adultery with Bathseba and murdered Uriah.

The key to David's story is that he is a repentant sinner. A joyful sinner. Not because he found joy in sin, but because he found joy in the Lord. Do you truly believe that joy in the Lord is greater than human failing?

## FOCUS

*Connecting to your own life.*

What if you walked into Mass and received the Eucharist with that much reverence and joy?

*Connecting to the New Testament.*

What connections do you find between this passage and the Mass?

## CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK

**Set a time for your group to go to Mass and/or Adoration together this week.**

# Leader Preparation



## Icebreaker for the week

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# Leader Preparation



**Other questions I would like to  
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# POST-ADVENT STUDY: WEEK 5: JOSEPH

## PREPARATION FOR LEADERS

**Spend time in Lection Divina with Matthew 1:18-25**

**Start off the new year in front of the Blessed Sacrament praying for the young adult ministry you are leading**

## BREAKDOWN

**For your icebreaker...**

What have you gained in understanding by looking at the ancestors of the Bible?

**Open in prayer and read Matthew 1:18-25**

For this particular week, break into men's and women's small groups.

## QUESTIONS

**What were you struck by in this passage?**

Men	Women
What do you notice in St. Joseph's initial response?	What do you notice in St. Joseph's initial response?
How can we, as men, learn from St. Joseph?	How can we, as women, learn from St. Joseph?
What does Joseph's faithful response to the angel say to you about our own call to faith?	What does Joseph's faithful response to the angel say to you about our own call to faith?

## REFLECTION

St. Joseph does not have a single recorded word in scripture. Yet he endures many frustrations: a wife not pregnant by him, not having a place to put his wife when she is about to give birth, then having to flee with his wife and an infant hundreds of miles. When we are tired and frustrated, do we offer them up to God or do we allow ourselves to roll in the mire of them?

## FOCUS

*Connecting to Old Testament*

In our past 3 weeks of study, was there anyone else with a similar resolve as Joseph?

*Connecting to your own life.*

Consider how St. Joseph handled the news of Mary's pregnancy.

Has anyone ever shown that kind of quiet mercy towards you? How did you respond?

## CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK

**There is a range of opinions on New Year's resolutions. However, you feel, take time to pray about one thing you are doing well in your faith life and one thing you would like to improve. Then strategize how you will make that improvements and find an accountability partner.**

# Leader Preparation



## Icebreaker for the week

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**What would I like the group to get out of this?**

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# Leader Preparation



**Other questions I would like to  
discuss**



# How to Lead Lectio Divina



Don't assume that your young adults know what lectio divina is

Before you start the first week, spend a few minutes explaining what lectio divina is and why Catholics think it is important.

Highlight what each portion is (lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio) and directions for each one

*\*see the Lectio Divina handout\**

Create a quiet, peaceful environment where you won't be interrupted

Encourage people to put away their phones and eliminate other distractions

Tell people to get comfortable

Open in prayer

Take your time

There is no need to rush. People may be uncomfortable the first week or two. That's ok. Make sure enough time is given to for silent reflection.

# Lectio Divina Handouts

\*can be copied and handed out to your group\*

## Lectio Divina

*Literally meaning "divine reading"*

*Practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer*

**Lectio:** What does the text say that everyone should understand?

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# Ideas for Advent Events



**Advent Party**  
Themed at a home, in your usual meeting location, or go out for a dinner. Be as creative as you would like.



## Adoration and Reconciliation

Coordinate as a region for an evening of recollection and make sure to contact the pastor at hosting parish



## Day Retreat

Theme ideas:  
-How do we prepare our hearts?  
-Christian Joy

OR

Use one of the verses from the study to dive a little deeper!

\*\*See "How to Plan a Day Retreat" for a sample schedule\*\*



## Service Projects

Contact your parish office to find out about what the parish needs help with during the Advent season: options could include Angel Tree wrapping, church grounds clean up, decorating, meal prep, etc..



**\*Always be in contact with your parish while planning events\***

# Guide for Planning and Organizing Events

## Basics of Planning and Hospitality

- 1) Always contact the parish for an event on parish property or if it could conflict with another parish event. For example, if your study is starting a new book, the parish likely isn't concerned, but if your study wants to organize a service event or Adoration on parish grounds, the parish office should always be consulted first.
- 2) Be prepared to answer logistical questions. Have a date, time, and location in mind, but be prepared to adjust if you need to. The parish may want to know how many people are you expecting, where and how you are advertising, if there is a promotional flyer they can use, what you would like the priest or staff member to do, etc.
- 3) Follow up, follow up, follow up! If you called and spoke to the parish secretary, send a follow up email. If you sent them an email, give them a phone call. Parishes have a lot of moving parts and it makes everyone's life easier if things are in writing and you speak directly to a staff member about an event. The week of an event send a reminder email or make a phone call to confirm plans and see what the parish might need from you.
- 4) Have a trusted, designated person to be at the event a little early. People forget things. Doors don't get unlocked. Speakers don't show up. Always have one or two people on location ahead of time, just in case. Be prepared for things not to always go as planned, so have people who can remain calm and think on their feet to help you run things.
- 5) Handwrite thank you notes, provide a stipend, offer a gift card or flowers. When someone goes above and beyond or took extra time to serve, acknowledge that. Going that extra step is excellent hospitality.

# ABC's of Ministry Events

## Adoration (Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament)

Always contact the parish ahead of time set up date, time, and location. Most parishes will ask if you would like Exposition and Benediction or if your group is fine with the Eucharist to remain in the tabernacle. Adoration occurs whether the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the monstrance or in the tabernacle. It is Exposition and Benediction that involve action from a priest or a deacon, as well as possible handouts to guide participants. There are also circumstances where a priest can appoint a lay person to move the Eucharist from the tabernacle in the pyx to the monstrance.

## Confessions

If requesting a confession time outside of parish scheduled confession times for an event or retreat, always contact the priest directly to arrange the sacrament. Have multiple examination of conscience handouts available for people to look over. a) For a regional event, if you are bringing in priests from another parish, always clear this with the pastor of the hosting parish first. Regional events are often larger, for which the Diocese may be able to offer to pay priests a stipend. b) For a parish only event, the young adult ministry providing a gift card and thank you note is appropriate.

## Mass

Mass should be organized through the parish office. You will need to coordinate lectors, servers, and extraordinary ministers with the priest ahead of time, as well as correct readings and prayer intentions. If the Mass will not be on site at a parish, know whether the priest will need a Mass kit and vestments, as well as knowing the set up for location ahead of time. You will need at least two flat surfaces for an altar and side table for supplies, as well as chair(s) for the clergy. If possible, provide a podium for lectors.

## Retreats

Organizing a retreat takes a lot of time, energy, and planning. Put together a team to discuss budget, theme, location, expected turnout, schedule, and who will be involved (speakers, musicians, clergy, etc). Your parish youth minister or DRE are likely helpful resources, as well as your Diocesan Associate Director of Young Adult Ministry.

# ABC's of Ministry Events

Continued...

## Service Projects (In or Outside of the Parish)

If the young adult ministry would like to complete a service project within the parish, contact the parish office to find out what projects might be available or need to be completed. If the young adult ministry would like to complete a service project outside of the parish, contact the organization with enough time in advance to make sure there are not any forms that must be completed first, if there are time slots that you have to sign up for, or if you must give them a guaranteed number of participants.

## Speaker Series

Location, Time, and Dates must be determined, as well as competent and reliable speakers. Just because someone offers themselves as a speaker, does not mean they are the right fit for the topic. If you are bringing in a speaker that will be open to the parish or region, check with your parish to ensure the speaker is welcome in the parish. Be aware that speakers also receive stipends or another form of compensation, such as a gift card or small gift, for their time and talent. Check with parish to see if they have a budget for young adults, if they do not, contact the Office of Young Adult Ministry to check on the budget for your parish or region.

## Theology on Tap

The Diocese has an annual membership for Theology on Tap with the instruction manual provided by Renew International for starting the program. Contact the Office of Young Adult Ministry for more information.

## Visiting Priest from another parish or the Bishop is visiting

A visiting priest or visit from the Bishop must be cleared through the pastor of the parish before the invitation is extended to the clergy who you would like to invite. Contact the parish office for clearance from the pastor as soon as you begin planning the event.

# Sample Day Retreat Schedule

This sheet serves as a base line for planning a day retreat. Participation in the sacraments or Adoration is encouraged upon availability, but do not undertake more than you need to when it comes to planning and coordinating.

For more assistance planning retreats, contact the Office of Young Adult Ministry.

<b>10:00am</b>	Welcome + Introduction of Theme for the Day
<b>10:15am</b>	Lectio Divina or Reading of Reflective Passage
<b>10:30am</b>	Quiet Personal Reflection Time
<b>11:00am</b>	Group Discussion / Small Group Time
<b>Noon</b>	Lunch
<b>12:30pm</b>	Presentation of Topic
<b>1:30pm</b>	Quiet Personal Reflection Time
<b>2:00pm</b>	Group Discussion/ Small Group Time
<b>2:45pm</b>	Wrap Up
<b>3:00pm</b>	Dismiss

# So you are going to plan a retreat...

## Welcome and Theme Intro

- Be excited, greet people warmly, and let them know you are happy they are there
- Theme should be formative, educational, and relatable (examples: Christian Hope, Spiritual Gifts and Strengths, Mercy, etc)
- Prayerfully select a scripture verse or faith formative meditative passage to match the theme

## Lectio Divina or Reflective Passage

- Have print outs for everyone, bibles to utilize, and paper with writing utensils
- As the leader, make sure you have prayed through the passage multiple times, have talking points if needed, and questions to hand out for personal reflection and small group time

## Quiet Personal Reflection Time

- Let people know the time they need to be back for group discussion
- Make sure the space you are in for the day allows people to spread out, get comfortable, or even take a walk and have extended quiet time. It is ok to tell people to put their phones away.

## Group Discussion/ Small Group Time

### Leadership Retreat

OR

### Parish Group/ Regional

Retreat

- if only up to 10 people, stay as one group for discussion
- stay on track and keep them focused on being nourished
- small group time can be run just like larger study, put people in groups of 3-5
- have questions for discussion ahead of time

## Meals, Snacks, Feeding People

- Depending on time of day you may need to provide two meals OR just one, plus simple snacks
- If parish retreat, contact parish office to see if another ministry is willing to sponsor the lunch
- For leadership retreat, you can cater in sandwiches, pizza, etc and send the receipts for reimbursement to the Associate Director of Young Adult Ministry

## Presentation of Topic

- This can be more formal or informal: speakers, experts, or clergy can be brought in OR you can speak on your own on a topic related to the theme that will be formative and nurturing to those in attendance

## Wrap Up and Dismissal

- Offer opportunity for sharing, as well as feedback (can be a handout they fill out and turn in)
- Make them aware of upcoming meetings or events