

The Annunciation and Spiritual Adoption

Use this complete prayer service with Chapter 8, Section 3 of Your Life in Christ. You may also choose to use only individual parts of the prayer service.

Needs:

- copies as needed or projection
- printed and cut copies of the prayer of spiritual adoption for each student found here <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5ETRkL51fhMZURwdG00QUJ4dUU/edit>

Prayer Introduction

Abortion is the deliberate killing of an unborn person. You have discussed how it is a serious violation of the Fifth Commandment. Every person is unique and wonderful, made in God's image. Today you will be discussing the connection between prayer and action in protecting the unborn.

Scripture Reading

Leader: (Have the students stand and begin with the Sign of the Cross.)

Reader 1: A reading from the Holy Gospel According to St. Luke (Lk 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,

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“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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection and Discussion

Leader: (Have students sit.) Does this situation sound familiar to you? A young, unwed woman with plans and dreams finds herself unexpectedly pregnant. She faces opposition, misunderstanding, and societal pressure. Despite this she chooses to keep the baby. It is difficult, but because she is faithful, God is too. Though there are tough times, God brings great good out of her choice to say “yes.”

This could be the story from any number of young women, but it is also the story of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. True, there are some very different circumstances that led her to becoming pregnant unexpectedly, yet it is also true that Mary understands very deeply the difficulties young women face in such situations.

(Ask these questions and allow time for students to answer.)

- What happens in the rest of Mary’s story that allows her to be supported with this crisis pregnancy? What can we do as a Church to support women and families?

Although abortion was not a part of Jewish culture at that time, it is part of how women today are often encouraged to “deal with” an unexpected baby.

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- How does abortion go against the Church's consistent life ethic of the right to life from conception to natural death? (The Church has consistently taught that abortion is wrong because it kills an innocent child, undermines the dignity of human persons (including the mother), and creates pain in relationships.)
- What can you do to be pro-life, especially for the unborn?

Today you will have the opportunity to pray for women, men, and their babies who find themselves in crisis pregnancies. You might hear people say "all we can do is pray" as if prayer was a lesser action. Certainly, you can pray for these people to be loved and supported by their local communities, not in just sustaining the pregnancy, but also by finding support to thrive as a family after the baby is born. Yet, prayer is a real and powerful way to support one another. Prayer changes us. Prayer changes those for whom we pray. Your prayers can have a significant impact.

- In what ways could you pray for our world to support the dignity of life?

Today you can commit to supporting a baby in danger of abortion with prayer over the next several months. This is called spiritual adoption. If you would like, commit to praying for this baby for nine months to spiritually support them in the womb. You can even name your baby to help you support them. You will probably never meet these people you supported in prayer and action in this life, but God will bring about a joyful reunion in heaven!

Prayer for Spiritual Adoption

(Pass out prayer cards and pray together. Optionally, you can ask students if they would like a monthly reminder; if so send out an email or another type of reminder.)

All: Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of [baby's name] the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion. Amen.

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