



[If you haven't already, begin your meal with meal prayer, then take turns reading these boxes aloud, following the directions where applicable]

The New Adam & Eve

During Advent, we are reminded of God's desire to be fully united with us. When we look back at the first moments of creation, Adam and Eve were in perfect unity with God...until they chose to stop trusting him and start disobeying him. From that moment, humanity has been divided from God, in a way that only Jesus could heal. To do this, Jesus became a new "Adam" when He became man.

As the mother of Jesus, Mary then became the new "Eve." God chose Mary to be the mother of the savior, and as part of this he gave her a special gift - he protected her from original sin, making her "immaculate" (in Latin, *immaculatus* means "stainless"). Because of this, the knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience; what Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith. By giving Mary this grace from the first moment of her life (conception), God showed us our own destiny. Those who die in God's friendship will go to heaven and be freed from all sin and stain of sin. We will all be made "immaculate" if we remain faithful to God.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

The Immaculate Conception is one of the most often misunderstood teachings of the faith. Many assume that this refers to how Jesus was conceived within Mary by the Holy Spirit. However, it actually refers to the teaching about how Mary was preserved from sin (kept immaculate or stainless) from her first moment of life. Pope Pius IX formally announced the dogma (teaching) of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1854.

The Immaculate Conception is not just a teaching, though. It is also a title for Mary herself. In 1858, the Blessed Mother gave her name to St. Bernadette at Lourdes stating, "I am the Immaculate Conception." It is part of her identity and reveals her life's purpose: to live in unity with God and in total service to Jesus.

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception is the patroness of the US. December 8th is a Holy Day of Obligation, a day when all of the faithful are expected to attend Mass to celebrate and ponder this great mystery and be inspired by Mary's example.

Discussion

[These questions are a spark for conversation, not a strict outline. Allow the Spirit to lead. Try to at least discuss the starred questions each week.]

- Review the Advent practice that you decided to do together as a family this Advent - how is it going so far? Do you need to make any adjustments?
- *Why might the Immaculate Conception be a good patroness for the USA? How could you honor this title of Mary in your home?
- The church teaches that God didn't *need* to make Mary Immaculate, but he chose to - why do you think he chose this?

Activity & Prayer

[For this activity section, you will need the additional resource provided by the parish. If you don't have it, you can download it on our website]

For a visual demonstration of the meaning of the Immaculate Conception, try out the attached activity using water, pepper, and soap.

Then, in the spirit of "making room" during Advent, challenge your family to find some things that you could let go of. Giving away some of our belongings is a good way to not only clean up our physical spaces, but to also bring order and peace to our hearts. Go on a scavenger hunt and see how many you can come up with!

Close in a prayer to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception:
O most Holy Virgin, immaculate in body and spirit, look kindly on me as I implore your powerful intercession.

O most Holy Mother, receive my prayers as I present them to God. (take turns stating your intentions here)

O Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, you intercede for us with your Son. O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. Amen.

Extras

- Check out the Advent content on FORMED.org - Click "Advent" in the header
- Sign up for the free Advent reflections from FORMED.org:
 - The True Meaning of Christmas weekly reflections
 - Children's Daily Reflections

https://daily.formed.org/advent?utm_source=cio&utm_medium=broadcast&utm_campaign=for-advent-promo-22&utm_content=body_button_signup

- Read more about the Immaculate Conception in the Catechism of the Catholic Church 490-494
<http://www.scborrowmeo.org/cc/c/p122a3p2.htm#490>

Sacramental Life

This week's journal prompt for first reconciliation/communion is:
Jesus said "I GIVE YOU A NEW COMMANDMENT: LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU." (Jn13:34). - What do you think he meant by this? How could you do this?

This week's confirmation work is:
Who is the Holy Spirit? Watch Decision Point 8.1 In your own words, who is the Holy Spirit? Describe a time in your life when you felt inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Links & information found at <https://staugustinedward.org/confirmation-preparation/>

Looking Ahead

For Next Week, Dec 14:

- See the parish or website for additional handouts and coloring pages.
- Next week we will discuss St. Lucy, whose feast day falls on Dec 13 (Tuesday) - make a note in case you want to celebrate on Tuesday (the COR page will be available after the weekend Masses Dec 11 and online)

Upcoming Events:

- Confirmation AND First Reconciliation/Communion Students - your whole family should plan to attend on Jan 11 6-8 pm at St Augustine for a formation night.

