

7 Swans a-Swimming

On this fourth Sunday in Advent, we read the story of Jesus' coming from the gospel of Matthew chapter one:

... an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save the people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel, which means God is with us."

We believe that anytime we gather with others, God is there with us, no matter the occasion. Our God enjoys us spending time in community, and whenever that happens Christ is in our midst - Emmanuel - God with us! This is Christmas! We invite you to remember this as you use these discussion starters for the dinner table, the car ride, family game night, or anytime you gather this season. The answers to these questions are simple and in many cases, there is more than one "right" answer. Regardless of the time you spend on any one or all of these questions, we hope you will know Christ is there with you in your conversations and learning with and from each other.

Discussion Questions

1. Think of seven different names of God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. Which ones are the most meaningful to you and why?
2. What are seven of your favorite Christmas carols or hymns?
3. How many stories from the Bible can you name that reference the number seven?
4. There are no swans a-swimming in the Bible, but can you name seven other animals that make an appearance in scripture?
5. What are seven life experiences that you'd recommend to everyone you know?
6. What are seven words that describe the group of people you're with right now?
7. What are seven ways you can help others between now and the New Year?

Closing Prayer

*Holy One, your words to Joseph continue to surprise us!
God chooses to live with us,
around our tables,
in our homes,
as we work and play,
as we study and rest,
as we cry and as we laugh.
This is Jesus' love for us, made plain each day.
This is love to be shared with those around us,
At Christmas and every day.
Amen.*