

## Children's Moment

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The fifth candle in the center of the Advent wreath is sometimes called the Christ candle and is lit on Christmas Eve. In this final deep-sea theology message, we're going to reflect on not one but two creatures, and two who can make their own light!

The first is the sea angel (*Clione limacina* and *Clione antarctica*). These teeny tiny sea snails (about 1.5-3 inches long) have winglike feet which allow them to swim quickly through the deep ocean as if they were flying. Their gooey see-through bodies create a mystical glow called bioluminescence, making them a graceful sight in the deep dark waters. Another remarkable quality of these angelic beings is that they are born male but develop female organs as they grow up. All adult sea angels have both male and female organs, and when they find their mate, they dance together in what looks like an underwater waltz.

Immortal jellyfish (*Turritopsis dohrnii*) also have an extraordinary transformation to share. When this kind of jellyfish is wounded, it basically begins to age backwards. Its body sinks to the ocean floor and rearranges itself into a slimy pile that looks like an egg. It then sprouts into a polyp and grows not only into itself again, but into many clones of itself too! Through its woundedness, the single jellyfish becomes healed as well as multiple. From what we understand, the immortal jellyfish can do this process over and over again throughout its life, hence its name. And as Sabrina Imbler explains, "it is not living forever but reliving forever."

I wonder what these creatures can teach us about Christ. What light do they shine on what it means for the Word to become flesh and dwell among us? To start out one way and transform into something else, someone else, something more or different, to make all things new? To be both human and divine, crucified and resurrected, one but many. For us, though, I'll end with Imbler's questions: "What if you could do it over? And then again? What body would you choose? Who would you be and who would you love? How shall you regrow, and in how many ways?"



*"...THE **GLORY** OF **GOD** SHONE AROUND THEM..."*

LUKE 2:9

# Spiritual Exercise

## Instructions:

For our final exercise, we will play with the cento format one more time. For this one, you're invited to read through the lectionary passages—preferably having volunteers read them aloud first—and choose two sentences or lines from each of the three passages. Once you have your six sentences, arrange them into a poem or spiritual reflection. You might even keep them in the order you found them in! Notice what language and phrases are speaking to you today and discover what they might have to say when put all together.

### Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

### Psalm 96

O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in God's sanctuary.

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts.

Worship the LORD in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth.

Say among the nations, "The LORD is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity."

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

before the LORD; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

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# Spiritual Exercise

## Psalm 96

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### Example:

Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart:  
 strength and beauty are in God's sanctuary.  
 all the trees of the forest sing for joy.  
 "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:  
 Those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.  
 You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;



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