Advent Faith Conversations:
The Fourth Week of Advent

"I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."
      -- From this Sunday's Gospel: Luke 1: 26-38

Adult reflection for this week

This week's theme is a call to open ourselves to receive God. Just a few hours away, Christmas celebrates Jesus' coming in history – incarnate as a man living amidst humanity; but it invites us to re-live the mystery *now*. Our tender God wants to dwell with *you* – to be present to your thoughts, feelings, and decisions – to share life with you, much as spouses share life. Like Mary, you may be troubled by this prospect (how, what does this mean, what will I have to do/give up?) Be reassured: *do not be afraid, you have found favor with God, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, nothing will be impossible for God*. Our God wishes intimacy with each of us and awaits our response!

Every now and then, the fourth week of Advent is very short, depending on which day of the week December 25th falls. This year, it's the shortest it can be: not even a full day! Sunday morning is the fourth week of Advent. Sunday night we're already celebrating Christmas Eve!

Family daily conversation and prayer starters

Maybe at breakfast, you can light all four candles, saying, "Jesus, you are the Light of the World." Everyone responds, "Let your light shine in our darkness." After the conversation, pray the prayer together on the second page (print so everyone has a mini-sheet) and sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

Sunday, December 24

How would you feel meeting an important person? (excited, nervous, unimportant) Jesus is greater than any world figure, yet he entered the world as a newborn, in poverty. What does this reveal about God. . . for yourself. . . for the world?

Tonight is Christmas Eve! The Light has dawned. Hope is fulfilled. Perfect joy is rooted in allowing Jesus to reign in our homes, hearts, and lives. *We welcome you, Emmanuel—our Joy!*

Print and cut one out for each family member.

Week 4 Prayer

Holy Spirit, come upon us! Heal, cleanse, warm, and fill us with your love. With you, all things are possible. Help us to open our hearts and homes to Jesus with joy. Amen.

Sing together:

O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease
And be Thyself our King of peace.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear. (Refrain)