

Hidden Gospel Women by Kathy Coffey

Definition

“Midrashic stories enhance biblical stories, imaginatively filling in blank spaces, expanding on underdeveloped or missing events, or casting them in a contemporary setting or language. Midrash explores the Bible, not through analysis, but through imagination.”

Optional Activity

Find someone in the Bible you always wanted to know more about. Using the midrash technique, concoct their story. Spend some time imagining a conversation with this person. If you'd like, bring it to the optional group sharing. Since it's all imaginative, you can't possibly be wrong!

Based on Hidden Women of the Gospels and More Hidden Women of the Gospels (Orbis Books) by Kathy Coffey 800-258-5838, orbisbooks.com

Discussion & Reflection Questions

“If our religion is based on salvation, our chief emotions will be fear and trembling. If our religion is based on wonder, our chief emotion will be gratitude.” –Carl Jung

Use any of these questions you find helpful for your discussion, or create your own.

People Who Seek

- A. Seeking requires risk-taking. When have you taken a risk and been glad you did? What opportunities do you regret not taking?
- B. As you stood imaginatively before the child in the crib, what gift did you bring?
- C. To what extent did you identify with the woman who followed the star?
- D. Wonder is at the heart of the midrash technique, which admits not having all the answers and imagining other possibilities. Recall an experience of wonder—not analyzing, cataloguing, judging, but simply marveling, maybe wordlessly.
- E. How was your experience of this form of prayer?
- F. Are you discovering anything new in these familiar stories that you may not have noticed before?

Advent Themes

Admitting need

As Advent starts, where are you in the process of admitting need or vulnerability?

Embracing What Comes

What reality—maybe an unpleasant one—do you need to lean into now, embrace and learn from?

Raising Expectations

The novelist Gail Godwin asks a question you may not want to answer immediately. You may want to simply sit with it: “Who of us can say we’re not in the process of being used right now, this Advent, to fulfill some purpose

whose grace and goodness would boggle our imagination if we could even begin to get our minds around it?"

OR

Why are we sometimes hesitant to believe such good news about ourselves?

Celebrating

How do you respond to the image of God as jailbreaker?

If you believe that everything in Christ's life occurs somehow in yours as well, what might God want to bring to birth in you now?

How do you feel about approaching Christmas, not necessarily about the material preparations—shopping, decorating, etc.—but the spiritual ones?

"Between God and the soul, there is no between." –Julian of Norwich

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious... source of all true art and all science. He [or she] to whom this 'emotion' is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder, or stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. His [her] eyes are closed." -- Albert Einstein

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