Intergenerational Worship

Bible Reading

Year A – Advent 4 Dec 18 2016 Isaiah 7:10-16; Matthew 1:18-25

What is this: Intergenerational Bible Reading and art observation

Where it’s used: In any intergenerational gathering, but specifically Lectionary based gatherings.

Time: 5 minutes

Bible Focus/theme:

What’s needed:
- Chris Booth art images ‘Mary tells Joe’ and ‘Milk and Honey’
- Jar of honey, decanted into several glasses. Put only a small amount (1-2 cm depth) of honey in each glass.
- Wooden popsticks – enough for one for each person in your gathering.
- Pieces of dry, white, firm, cheese – for example haloumi or feta - cut or broken into small cubes.
- Serviettes/wipes

Introduction

One of our readings today comes Matthew’s gospel. It’s about how a young peasant girl, Mary discovers she will have a child, through the Holy Spirit.

Matthew stops in the middle of this story, and tells us a little bit of another story from a long time before. It’s a bit like when your grandpa is telling you about something that happened the other day – and then he launches into one of those really interesting tales about ‘back in my day’. Across the whole Gospel according to Matthew, this happens about ten times, tying the story of Jesus in the first century to the stories of God’s people in even more ancient times.

And just like when your grandpa launches into one of those ‘back in my day’ stories, there is always a purpose, some kind of link or reminder of something important to pick up on. And just like with your grandpa, you sometimes have to listen carefully and think a bit to work out what it is. Grandpas, and the Gospel according to Matthew are pretty clever that way.

So today let’s listen to the story from Matthew first, and then we’ll hear a bit from Isaiah.

- Display image ‘Mary Tells Joe’
1:18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph,

1:19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

1:20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him 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.

1:21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

1:22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

1:23 "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

1:24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,

1:25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.