The Big Church Read

Discussion Starters
Session 6 Praying Imaginatively with a Gospel Story

SELECTION OF BIBLE PASSAGES

Luke 1:26-38—the angel Gabriel appears to Mary, Matthew 3:13-17—the baptism of Christ, John 2:13-25—Jesus clears the Temple of sellers, Matthew 14:13-21—Jesus feeds five thousand, Matthew 14:22-33—Jesus walks on the water, Luke 24:13-35—Jesus appears to the disciples on the Emmaus road

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss this practice of placing yourself into a gospel story. Have you done it before? How do you feel about it?
2. What do you think of the discussion on page 115 about the interaction between the historical Jesus and the risen Christ? How can we move from engaging with Jesus on the pages of the gospels to the risen, living Christ?
3. If we "see God as an angry despot, an uncaring creator, or a demanding father," how will our practice of gospel contemplation be affected (page 123 and following)? Why?
4. Discuss Ignatius's three questions (page 126). How do they help us to enter the gospel story? To reflect on our own story?

PRAYER PRACTICE

Lead the "Shining with Light" prayer practice (from page 127), following the instructions. Or choose one of the gospel stories to enter into with your group. Start with a prayer asking God to lead you in a fruitful encounter with the story. Read through the passage once or twice to the group so they are familiar with it. Then lead them through the story, adding details and questions that will root them into the story. For instance, what do they see, hear, smell, feel? Who are they in the story? What are they doing? Allow enough time for silence so they can enter into the story. Bring the exercise to a close with a prayer of thanks and dedication, and then allow some time for people to share about their experience.