



Advent 2013 Rediscovering Identity

4. You have been created to live out your unique identity

Preparation

It is important to set aside an Advent space, however small, where your materials and notes can remain undisturbed for the Advent season.

Materials

Bible
pen and notebook
matches
candle (you will use this same candle every week)



Begin

Calm down. Adjust to the setting. Acknowledge your relationship with God. Light the candle to remind you that you that this is devoted time; set apart. Place the candle in its dedicated Advent space where it can remain for the week.

Contemplate

Jesus came with a special purpose. Every one of us is placed on earth to live as we alone can do. Part of your identity is this calling.

Read [Luke 2:25-52](#)

Reflect *if in a group by discussion or if alone through journaling*

Why did Jesus come?

: what did the people in the story believe and say about who Jesus was and why he'd come?

: how did Jesus understand his unique role and identity?

: the entire New Testament is an explanation of who Jesus was and why he came!

Respond

Write down at least three reasons why you believe Jesus came.

Share these as comments on <http://differentchurch.wordpress.com/2013/12/22/advent-week-4-reflection>

Prayer

Lord, show me who you have made me to be. There is no one like me in all the world. What do you want to say to me about living out my unique identity?

Follow-up

God has also created each of us with a unique purpose. Most of us spend our lives discovering and living into this calling. Ask an elderly person to describe their understanding of why they were put on the earth.

Ask at least one other person why they think Jesus came. The goal isn't to convince them of what you believe but to discover how others understand Jesus' unique identity and calling.

Write some words (or draw pictures) which describe the calling God has built into your identity. Place this in your special Advent space.

[Luke 2: 25-52](#)

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.