


	The Birth	
Presence of God	Considering how God looks at me.	
History Luke 2, 1 – 7	<p>1 Now it happened that at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be made of the whole inhabited world.</p> <p>2 This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, 3 and everyone went to be registered, each to his own town.</p> <p>4 So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee for Judaea, to David's town called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, 5 in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.</p> <p>6 Now it happened that, while they were there, the time came for her to have her child, 7 and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the living-space.</p>	
Petition	<i>Lord, may I know you more clearly, love you more deeply and follow you more nearly!</i>	
Contemplation	<p>Waiting for Him to be born</p> <p><i>Remember that God wanted to save the world through his Son, and so He chose a mother for him ... (Mary) The Virgin accepted this mission and said that she was ... (God's servant), and that she was at God's disposal. Later she went to visit Elizabeth, her relative, to help her because she was very old and she was expecting a baby (John the Baptist). After John's birth, Mary returned to Nazareth. She lived with Joseph and for several months, they were waiting for Jesus to be born. Jesus' grandmother probably knitted lots of clothes for her beloved grandchild. Joseph was a carpenter, so, what do you think that he made for Jesus?... the cradle, toys... Let's imagine Mary and her whole family getting everything ready for the birth of Jesus. What did the grandpas do?... What did Joseph do?... How did Mary feel?</i></p>	<p>Mary knows how to transform a manger into a home for baby Jesus, only with swaddling clothes and tons of tenderness. (Pope Francis, EG 286)</p> <p>Mary, did you know?</p>
	<p>vv 1 – 4 Bethlehem, out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd my people (Micah 1,1)</p> <p><i>When they were so pleased thinking that their son would be born in their little town, Nazareth, the Emperor's soldiers suddenly arrived in town and informed them that the Emperor wanted to carry out a census to know how many people lived in the empire; so everybody had to go to their home town. As Joseph was from Bethlehem, he got very worried and thought ... How are we going to make such a long journey now that Mary is about to have God's Son, whom I must look after? Will Mary be able to make such a long journey? But inside their hearts they felt that God encouraged them to go to Bethlehem, where the Savior of the world was to be born according to the prophets! Let's imagine the things they packed for the trip... Let's imagine Mary, very big by now, riding a donkey and Joseph walking very slowly for days and days... Imagine that you go with them to help...how can you help them?</i></p>	<p><i>Mary did you know that your baby boy will some day walk on water? Mary did you know that your baby boy will save our sons and daughters? Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new? This child that you've delivered, will soon deliver you. Mary did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man? Mary did you know that your baby boy will calm a storm with his hand? Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod?</i></p>

vv 6 – 7 God is rejected
When they arrived in Bethlehem, did they find a lodge? Why weren't they welcome?... Why didn't the people realize that God was about to be born? Let's close our eyes and imagine Joseph and Mary (with their Son about to be born), knocking on doors and asking for a place to stay... What did they say? ... What did people answer?... When they were not accommodated, how did Joseph feel? How did Mary feel?

vv 6 – 7 God, determined to save us
Somebody showed them a small place, a shelter where animals spent the night to protect them from the cold weather. What was this place like? Let's close our eyes and imagine this manger.... (children share what they have imagined). Let's close our eyes again and go back to that manger and suddenly... we hear a baby crying softly ... YES!!!! JESUS HAS BEEN BORN!!! God became a man and came to stay with us for ever. Imagine the baby in Mary's arms... How did Mary feel? How did Joseph feel?

And when you kiss your little baby, you have kissed the face of God. Oh Mary did you know The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again. The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, the praises of the lamb Mary did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation? Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day rule the nations? Did you know that your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb? This sleeping child you're holding is the great I AM.

Mark Lowry



Colloquy

Let's sit on the carpet, on the promised land, near Jesus, to hear him in the silence of our hearts. Would you like to hold baby Jesus in your arms? Why don't we ask Virgin Mary if she let us hold the baby for a little while? Do you think she will say yes? Close your eyes now and cradle your arms in this way (you show them how to cradle their arms to hold a baby) to hold baby Jesus in your arms for a little while.

