

SIERRA_WEEK_3_FOR_EDITING5zhp1

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Speakers:

Natalie Thomas - 34.03%

James Thomas - 13.57%

J. Sierra Reyes - 52.4%

Notes:

No notes.

Natalie Thomas 00:00:00

Hello and welcome to Bedtime Chapel's weekly scripture study. I'm Natalie Thomas.

James Thomas 00:00:05

And I'm James Thomas. We are deacons in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

Natalie Thomas 00:00:09

And Bedtime Chapel grew out of our shared desire to support families who want to know, love, and follow Jesus in a post Christian world.

James Thomas

00:00:17

We offer a nightly prayer service that includes a short gospel reading. In this episode, we'll be covering the readings for Third Epiphany.

Natalie Thomas

00:00:25

And we are here again with Sierra, who is the canon to the Ordinary in the Diocese of Catholic California, as well as a good friend of mine. And we want to get it started, Sierra, just by asking you what practical tips you have for families who are looking to bring faith into the home.

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And you can share any examples of things that you have either done or witnessed or that you wish you were doing with your kids. Anything.

J. Sierra Reyes

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One thing that we did a lot of around the age of like 4, 5, 6, 7, you know, as children are beginning to learn to read, is to use the Psalter in the Book of Common Prayer as a way for children to, particularly our child, to get comfortable with. With reading. Some of the language in the Psalter is really accessible.

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And those that are not, you know, you kind of can sound it out. Righteousness is not a sight word, so you gotta kind of sound that one out. But, you know, most of the other language there can be really accessible. So I would say that. And for me, gratitude is really important. So one of the sacred times that I have with my daughters at night, I unfortunately can work some long hours, but I really try to keep sacred that time right before she goes to sleep and I just sort of have a chair near her bed and we talk and we sort of go through what were the three to five things that we're grateful for in this past day.

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And it's a really great way to also get to know about what she's going through in school and get to know the people and the things that are happening in her life right now. And so those are two ways I think that could be helpful for families to engage faith and prayer within their own.

Within their own lives.

James Thomas

00:02:22

Yeah. Thank you so much. And such a driver of the idea behind this podcast is the reclamation of the nighttime prayer. It's something we talked about in our. I guess it was our. Was that trailer number one or trailer number two? In one of our trailer episodes, Natalie quotes a reading from a mystic about the.

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The reclamation of this time. And we are finding, as we are now six weeks or so into bedtime chapel as a, as a nightly occasion in our home, that it really is reclaiming that time for our family and as much, as much for Natalie and I as for our children. And that's been a beautiful experience.

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One of the things we decided to do at as we put this together is we decided not to censor the lectionary. We're reading the Gospel sequentially and that brings us into encounters with texts that are admittedly more difficult for young people. We're going to encounter one such reading this week. The story of John the Baptist's murder is particularly graphic.

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It's violent, it's sexualized. If you're advising parents as they prepare to hear the readings this week, how should they prepare to hear this with children and potentially answer any questions that kids might have about John's fate?

J. Sierra Reyes

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Well, I think a lot of it depends on the age of the child. But I would say that if your child's in school, so school aged, it probably won't seem as completely out of touch or graphic for, for kids in school nowadays. Cause folks are exposed to a lot more unfortunately in schools.

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So I would say for it to be age appropriate, of course. But regarding the heading of John the Baptist, I just think it's an opportunity to really share with children that the Bible includes all. I sort of see it as not one book, but as a library of different books with different genres.

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And just as a library would have all sorts of different knowledge and ways of telling truth,

the same is true with our Bible. And so this is an example of that. And how even in the midst of what seems to be violent and makes no sense, it is also pointing to something that the story goes on that is not the end of the story.

00:05:00

And so as I think about relating this to children and to my child, to say even the thing that you could think that is the worst thing ever to happen. It's never the end of the story. There's always a comma, there's always a continuation. You just got to stick with it. You got to stick with the story.

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And so that's what I would share around the beheading of John the Baptist.

Natalie Thomas

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One of the factors in that story is that Herod is an interesting character. He seems to be drawn to John and to know that there's something special about John, but also to buy into the crowd and the communities fear of this person. And in this moment of demand, he's willing to ignore what he senses to be true about this powerful truth teller for the sake of the party.

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And we found this to be particularly compelling. And I think it was our first episode. You talked about the importance of justice and naming how evil plays out in injustices in our world today, that there are so many truth tellers in our world that are speaking out against harm that's being done to one another, but they often get ignored because it's not fun, you know, for the sake of the party.

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Right. And so we're just curious to you, who are the voices that you're listening to or who are the voices that you think we as a church, we as a people who are trying to follow Jesus, need to be better listening to today to hear this sort of bold truth that John was proclaiming then.

J. Sierra Reyes

00:06:41

I'm realizing that there are new generations of leaders that are coming up in the church, that I'm no longer the youngest voice, which is actually good. And I really am curious, curious about Generation Z and generation, even Alpha, which is the generation that my daughter is a part of, of how they are making meaning out of the social issues of our time and also the church's response to those issues.

And so I. I am intentional. I really want to hear and learn more from our younger generations around what church looks like and feels like and is being experienced, like, for them in their context. Because our world, our church, is changing rapidly. And I think that's not a scary thing. Like, I think that's good.

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I think that that shows that it's a living and breathing community body, that we are not a museum. We are a growing and a changing body. And I would really love to know and to hear and to seek out those voices from our younger generations to be able to help shape our understanding of what we know as church and as the direction our church is going.

Natalie Thomas

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We recently had a bishop's election in the Diocese of Massachusetts, I guess, in May of this year. And in preparation for that event, one of the leaders of our diocese put together an event where it was an opportunity for generations to speak to one another about these exact questions about. About what the church was being called into and what sort of a leader.

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And it was very powerful for me, someone who has been at times tokenized, idealized, held up as a young person in the church to recognize that's not me anymore. And there are, you know, there are voices coming from folks that are saying things. And I even find myself sometimes going, whoa, I don't know how I feel about that.

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But then I'm like, well, you're being invited to consider it. Right? And so it just is a lovely reminder of the importance of those kinds of events, of bringing people together to have conversation across lines of identity, age, gender, race, to really say, where is God calling us in this moment?

J. Sierra Reyes

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And I think that that is a unique calling of the church. There are fewer and fewer multi generational spaces in our societies today. And the church is where a 8 year old and an 80 year old can have a common language and a common story. And I hope that the church in the future, you know, whatever the church looks like as we continue to move forward, never loses that, because that's truly our gift to our society is to be able to bring people of different ages and different generations together for a common mission.

James Thomas

00:10:18

Our last question for this segment is about two miracle stories. On Thursday we're going to hear the feeding of the 5,000, and then Friday we're going to hear Jesus walking on water. Do you have any closing thoughts for this segment about how to engage with children with miracle stories?

J. Sierra Reyes

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I love being able to like describe to my daughter how big and amazing God is. And so big and amazing you can't even fathom it. And the miracle stories are opportunities for that just to not only share that through Jesus, God cares about you individually, but then also that God through that love and through that care can do amazing things.

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And that through that love he always wants to help us. Even when like in the in Jesus feeding the 5,000, when it feels like that there is not enough to go around, that there's always enough. And that spirit of abundance is really something that I want to lift up and not a posture of scarcity.

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But my hope is that abundance then translates into action of degeneracy with that abundance. It's not 5,000 just so that it could be hoarded and then saved for a future famine, but 5,000 so that it could be shared in the moment, in real time, present tense, so that there is this understanding that God can make a way when it feels like there is no way.

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And so my hope is like through conversations and hearing about God's miracles, through Jesus feeling. And I hope that through hearing more about God's miracles that it gives an understanding of God's abundance and God's gift to us that we then can share in our own way. It won't be a miracle like the feeding of the 5,000, but it could be something in our own context that we can be able to share.

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Which is like for my daughter, that was, she has, she's wanted to give gifts to her class back in Christmas. And so she had so much joy in doing that. And taking them to school and just being able to be generous with her classmates. For me, that that's a miracle. Like, that's a miracle for at a time where in Christmas it's all about, what can you get me?

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For her to be able to want to share that with others and be able to share generosity with

others. And so my hope is that miracle, that miracle parable can encourage and inspire generosity and abundant living.

Natalie Thomas

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Yeah, I love that. What a beautiful way to end this conversation. I'm recalling our first conversation in which you were talking through the ways to bring the understanding of evil and pain to the everyday. And then also this incredible image of abundance and seeing miracles in the everyday. Thank you so much for that.

J. Sierra Reyes

00:13:45

Yeah.

Natalie Thomas

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And thank you in general for being with us today, Sierra, and to James and to you for all you do to make this possible. And thank you to the wider community of people who are praying with us. And we do have a community of people who we are connected to. And one of those people that we want to lift up is someone named Kelsey, who wrote us a beautiful review that we shared on Instagram a while back that said, thank you so much for creating this.

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I'm loving the opportunity to have a way to pray in a structured way that is short with my children. And we are so glad, Kelsey, that you are praying with us. And we want to stay in touch with you. We want to get to know all of you and how Bedtime Chapel is blessing your families.

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You can find us on Facebook and Instagram, both of our on both of those channels. Our handle is Bedtime Chapel. You can write us an email at bedtime_chapel@gmail.com and you'll find all of this on our website, which is also Bedtime Chapel. And until next time, we will be praying with.