

Children's Moment



At 7,000 feet below the earth's surface, yeti crabs (*Kiwa puravida*) can be found dancing over cracks in the ocean floor. These remarkable crustaceans wave their large fuzzy claws over their heads and sway back and forth over and over again. When scientists first found these crabs, living in what they thought were unimaginable conditions, they were fascinated by this deep-sea dance party. These crabs wave their arms up in the air like they just don't care all day and night. Not to mention, they are constantly bumping into each other, but without causing any fuss or fights among them. They just keep on swaying together.

For a long time, scientists thought that all life needed the light of the sun to exist. But these recent deep-sea discoveries have found creatures that use the light and warmth from the Earth instead. At the bottom of the ocean, volcanic cracks in the seafloor will suddenly open a spring of heat and nutrient-rich gases that give them what they need to survive. And yeti crabs not the only ones. Other creatures, even our friend the purple octopus, have been found gathering around these vents.

Science writer Sabrina Imbler reflects on this survival strategy by, saying, "I prefer to think of it not as a last resort but as a radical act of choosing what nourishes you." She goes on to explain that the yeti crabs really are moving with meaning, that they "dance to live." The swaying allows them to gather bacteria they use as food to get caught in their claws and to get oxygen from the constant motion. They are basically farming through dancing!

When Mary arrives and greets her cousin Elizabeth, Elizabeth says to her, "when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy!" I wonder about what baby John the Baptist and the yeti crabs have to show us about joy. How it gets expressed with our bodies; how it overflows to those around us and just needs to be shared; how important it is for life and helps us find what nourishes us.

How do you share your joy with others? How does it feel in your body? Can you make your own "yeti crab dance?"



"...THE GLORY OF GOD SHONE AROUND THEM..."

LUKE 2:9

Spiritual Exercise

Instructions:

In today's Gospel reading, John the Baptist is approached by a variety of people asking him what to do. In this exercise, you're invited to write your own dialogue based on this passage with characters of your choosing. Fill in the blanks to name your characters and then offer a response. You might consider groups of people from today asking John, Jesus, Mary, Spirit, another biblical character, or some wise person you have known, "what should we do?" and then imagine how they would respond. Be as creative as you like. And as always, there's no one right or wrong way to do this. Just see what comes up for you.

Luke 3:7-18

3:10 And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?"

3:12 Even tax collectors came, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

3:14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?"

And _____ asked _____, "What then should we do?"

Even _____ came, and asked _____, "Teacher, what should we do?"

_____ also asked _____, "And we, what should we do?"

Example:

And the children asked Mary, "What then should we do?"

And Mary said, lead the way.

Even white supremacists came, and asked Mary, "Teacher, what should we do?"

And Mary said, put down the heaviness of your loneliness, lean into true belonging, put down your sword of imperial colonialism, shout from the rooftops for a ceasefire, and sin no more.

People who use drugs also asked Mary, "And we, what should we do?"

And Mary said, remember that you are beloved, worthy of life and community. Know that I am here. No conditions asked. Be not afraid. I'm so glad you are here.



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