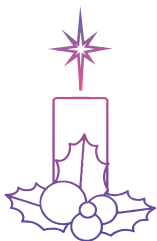


Children's Moment



As we journey into deep space this Advent season, let us start with a rather remarkable beginning—the birth of a planet. When a big cloud of gas and dust in space (called a nebula) falls in on itself, it makes a brand-new star. Around that baby star, the leftover gas and dust form a giant, spinning disk, kind of like a pancake in space. The tiny dust specks inside the disk bump into each other and stick together, slowly growing into bigger rocks. These rocks keep crashing together until they become whole planets. Whether large like Jupiter or small like our own planet Earth, every planet begins with just two little pieces of cosmic dust coming together and staying together. It seems almost too simple to be true. And yet, it is!

I wonder if hope works in a similar way—by one small connection at a time; by one relationship, thought, or by one wish coming true. Consider how Jesus came into the world, and Mary's conversation with the angel Gabriel. To be asked to be Jesus' mother was such a big life event, and yet it was started through the simple act of conversation. Have you ever thought about what helped Mary say "yes" that day? What were all the everyday moments like before that one moment occurred? How might she have built trust over time to hope in God's message? Perhaps it is as the Book of Jeremiah reminds us: God has plans of Good News, 'plans to give you hope and a future' (Jer. 29:11). What do you hope for this Advent season? And what small moments might be leading you there?



*"...WHEN THEY SAW THE **STAR**, THEY WERE FILLED WITH **JOY**..."*

MATTHEW 2:10