

# The Holy Family Flees to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15)

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**Guidelines (For Groups):** Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

**Ignatian Meditation Process:** Ignatius chose this Gospel reading for Week 2 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then "Ask for the grace". Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a "colloquy" (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

**Introduction:** If it weren't Joseph listening to his dreams and acting on them it appears that Jesus would've been killed as a child. He was the loving, wise, and protective husband and father that Mary and Jesus needed. He led them out of Bethlehem before Herod's rampage killed all the little boys there. They remained hidden safely, far away in Egypt. Some time later Joseph was again guided by God in his dreams to learn that it was safe for them to return to their home in Nazareth. Gentle, discerning, and strong protectors like Joseph help us and the people around us to trust in God.

**Ask For the Grace:** Lord Jesus, I ask for the grace I desire: to know you more intimately, to love you more intensely, and to follow you more closely.

**Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: Matthew 2 (MSG)**

13 After the scholars were gone, God's angel showed up again in Joseph's dream and commanded, "Get up. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay until further notice. Herod is on the hunt for this child, and wants to kill him."

14-15 Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother under cover of darkness. They were out of town and well on their way by daylight. They lived in Egypt until Herod's death. This Egyptian exile fulfilled what Hosea had preached: "I called my son out of Egypt."

**1st Reading:** Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with or are you a bystander?

**2nd Reading:** Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?