

## **“An Empty Church at Noon”**

Listen carefully to the following poem. Discuss the poem with your group, using the questions on the handout “An Empty Church at Noon’ Questions” (TX006764) to spark conversation. You are not limited to those questions.

### **“An Empty Church at Noon”**

by Joanna Dailey

The sound of water trickles in a baptismal pool,  
and an electrician teeters on a tall ladder  
near the head of Saint Joseph,  
dangling a leg,  
changing a light bulb.

Honest work never interferes with prayer.

The ferns in front of the altar table  
grow full in stained-glass light,  
thrive in the dimness.

A red lamp glows near a side altar  
above a golden box that remains firmly closed.  
It holds a Secret.  
Who knows? We know.

The brown pews line up like soldiers  
at parade rest.  
No one needs them now.

Except me.

I have genuflected. I have marked myself  
with the sign of the cross.  
I have knelt.

Now I sit, staring at the arches in the ceiling,  
dotted with chandeliers:  
“Light from light, true God from true God.”

No organ, no flute, no guitar:  
Only the thumping stereo from a car stopped outside.  
(Praise the Lord, ye thumping stereos!)

So that's the church.  
And that's the steeple.  
Open the doors.  
Where are the people?

