



Week 7 (December 13-19): Lesson Guide

Open In Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Ask the group to recall the guidelines for discussion that we use to create a safe environment.

Ask someone to retell last week's story from Matthew 2:1-15 (The Magi – Jesus is Shepherd).

Ask someone on your team to read the Hook Question – Ask, “Can you remember a time when someone you looked up to did something that made you feel really honored or special?”

Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:

This week, we will continue our focus on who Jesus is through another Christmas story. In today's story, an angel told Mary that she would give birth to Jesus. The angel promised Mary that Jesus would be called the Son of the Most High, be given the throne of His father, David, and His kingdom would never end.

Before you hear the story, it is important to understand why the throne of David was so important. God made a promise, a covenant, with David. He told David that one of his heirs would reign on the throne of Israel forever. The throne of David passed from one of David's descendants to another until the kingdom of Judah (the southern kingdom of Israel) fell to the Babylonians in 597 B.C. When Judah fell, it could have appeared that God failed to keep His promise to David. However, Jesus, born of the line of David, was born the eternal King of kings and Lord of lords. The angel brought amazing news to Mary – God would use her to keep His promise through Jesus! The name Jesus means Savior.

Historically, this story took place around 4 B.C. in a town called Nazareth which was south of the Sea of Galilee. *This is where our story begins...*

Tell the story from Luke 1:26b-38

Rebuild the story – (Group members retell the story based on what they remember)

Read Luke 1:26b-38 – (Ask the group to read these verses)

Discuss these questions:

Head
Questions:
Quicker
tempo.

- What do you like about this story, and is there anything you dislike?
- What does this story teach us about God? (Remember, Jesus is both God and God's Son)
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What impresses you the most about Mary?

- How do you relate to this story?
- Listen to the Spirit— what is God showing you today?

Heart Questions:
Slow down & wait!

Ask for a volunteer to retell the story one last time.

Ask for a volunteer to tell the story next week.

Prayer Requests (ask someone in the group to take notes so you can email the requests to the group)

Pray (don't feel the need to mention every request in prayer again, just pray for the group and send the email)



Week 7: Coaching Guide

Christmas season is here! **Why do we do all this again?!** This season is busy, and often stressful! Shopping, hosting, cooking, cleaning, partying, attending, supporting, giving, getting... the list goes on and on!

Slow down for just a second. No really, stop and take a deep breath.... Ah, okay --- The reason we do all of this is because of what Christ has done for us. Although we enjoy festivities, traditions, and family during this time of year, the real meaning is all about who Jesus is and who He has made us to be. While we enjoy the holidays, let's not forget to be men and women after God's own heart this Christmas season...

Leading [learn to facilitate your group more effectively]

- Your group likely has a few people who have lots of friends and family to spend the holidays with. Stay in touch with these people if they miss group. Let them know the group misses them, but that you are all happy that they are able to enjoy the holiday season with loved ones.
- There may be one or more people in your group who will feel extra lonely around the holiday season. This could be empty-nesters, the elderly, shut-ins, those in the hospital, people who have family out of state, homeless or low income families, etc.
 - When you think about cancelling a group meeting, think about these people the most! Don't make easy decisions that make your holiday season more relaxing. Give of yourself as you show love to those who need their group family this time of year!

Shepherding [know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]

- Consider how the Lord wants to use you to minister to the people who need their church family during this time of year. What can you do outside the group meeting?
 1. **Go caroling** with the available members of your group. Visit the shut-ins, hospitalized, those in nursing homes, etc. and bring them some Christmas cheer.
 2. **Deliver a gift basket.** Ask some of the people in your group who have a lot to give some to those who have little. Encourage those who have family out of state, the elderly, etc.
 3. **Invite others to join you during your family celebrations.** For years our family has included "adopted family members" during our Christmas morning celebrations and other family events. We have had a host of people join us as we unwrap presents, eat breakfast, and spend time together. Make sure they have a gift to unwrap if they are there for present time!
 4. **Send a card.** Sometimes just receiving a personalized note will warm someone's heart in a special way.

Developing [grow as a disciple yourself]

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (NIV, John 3:16).

Our God has a giving heart. God the Father gave up His one and only Son for us. God cares for and is generous with His children. If we are going to share God's heart, we must be prepared to give of ourselves.

The Father gave the Son for our sake. Don't turn family, the Christmas season, time-off of school and/or work, traditions, etc. into idols. What God has given you is for your enjoyment, but also for you to share. Remember to love others, especially during this time of year.

Merry Christmas!! Joy to the world, peace on earth, good will to all people.