



Week 7: December 15-21

10min Welcome / Introduce Guests
Celebrate! / Open in Prayer / Recall the Guidelines

2min *Share the Vision: Growing spiritually means growing in faith and growing in love. This Christmas season, our group is aiming at growing in faith in Jesus and growing in love for one another.*

5min **Hook Question:** Stop and think. Who is God placing on your heart that you can love well this Christmas Season? How can our group work together to love others well during this Christmas season?

2min **Retell Last Week's Story:** Matthew 18:21-35 (The Unforgiving Servant)

5min **Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:**
Today's story takes place shortly after the birth of Jesus. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary just over 2000 years ago. Mary was His mother, but God Himself was Jesus's Father. The name "Jesus" means "Savior." Jesus is God in human flesh. He was born to come and save us from our sins so that we could be made right with God and with one another.

Before Jesus was born, some Magi or wise men as we commonly know them, saw a sign in the heavens concerning the arrival of a newborn king. This sign was a star. The Bible is not clear how these Magi knew the star was a sign, but what we do know is that they were watching the stars and seeking God's sign. When these Magi saw the sign, they were willing to pack up and make the massive investment of traveling to the place of the star: Bethlehem. The trip would have been very difficult and expensive. They traveled hundreds of miles on camelback across deserts and dry lands. They did all this because they were seeking God.

The other character in today's story is Herod the Great. Herod was the king in the area where Jesus was born. As you hear this story, notice the difference between Herod and the Magi. Both the Magi and King Herod were royalty, but they related to God very differently. With this, our story begins...

12min **Tell the story from Matthew 2:1-23:** *Remember to change up the storyteller often.*
Rebuild the story: *Group members retell the story based on what they remember.*
Read the story from Matthew 2:1-23: *Ask the group to read these verses.*

Discussion Questions: learn to talk about God's Word with others...

Head
Questions:
Quicker
tempo.

- What do you like or dislike about this story? What stands out to you the most?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God?

Heart & Hand
Questions:
Slow down &
wait!

- What do you think God is trying to show you through this story and our discussion?
- Who could retell the story for us right here one last time?

*Remind your group of the plan between now and the New Year.
Close in prayer.*



Week 7: Can Your Group Count On You?

"It is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy." 1 Corinthians 4:2

For the past six weeks, we have reviewed important principles every disciple-maker should consider during the Holiday Season. With only one more week between us and the Holiday Season, it is time to take inventory. Can your small group count on you this Holiday Season?

The quickest way to let people down that we are discipling and sharing real-life relationships with is to jerk them around on the plans. When we fail to communicate, what we are really saying is that the people around us are not important to us. Consider this text I sent my small group this morning concerning the Holiday Season...

"Here are a few dates coming up for our small group for Christmas!

December 15 – Christmas program at Western Hills Church

December 16 – Last guys' lunch at Fuzzy's until new year and small group that night

December 23 – Game night at Chad's place (Rachael and I will be out of town)

December 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at Western Hills (5-6pm)

December 30 – Laser Tag Night! Details TBD.

On January 6th we are back to group and our guys' lunch at Fuzzy's will pick back up!"

Can you see what is happening in this text? Notice a few details...

1. **Communication.** My group knows the plan. They know how to stay connected. They know they are welcome to be part of our lives this Christmas season.
2. **We didn't cancel.** Rachael and I will be gone one week, but some other group members plan to host our small group that night. Why? Because we are not trying to lead a Bible Study! We are aiming at connecting people to real-life relationships.
3. **We are making connections.** First, we are connecting our small group to our church family this Christmas by turning church events into small group events!

Second, we are encouraging our small group to reach out and invite others. We have been doing this every week in small group, too.

4. **Our group feels loved.** All of them know through this text and other communications that they are welcome to share Christmas with our family.
5. **Everyone knows when we get back to routine!** Notice that we let people know when they can expect our group meetings to resume and get back to normal.

Over the next few weeks, I will be texting our group to remind them of events, see how people are doing, and make sure everyone has a place to spend Christmas morning. We will also be encouraging our group members to invite guests and casting vision for them to connect with others relationally over the holidays.

Can your group count on you?

Can your small group count on you to help them stay connected? To make sure they have a place to spend Christmas? To encourage them to make relational connections with others this Holiday Season? To reach out to them and make them feel loved? To encourage them to love one another? To let them know when they can get back to the routine after the New Year?

Take time this week to talk to your assistant and/or your spouse. Make a plan with them then send a text like the one I sent above. Keep communicating with your group this Holiday Season and encourage them to stay connected, to connect others, and to love each other well. If you will do this, you will be the kind of leader your small group can count on!

Contact your coach if you need help! See you on the other side of the New Year!! Have a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!!!!

Brandon Werner

Small Group & Discipleship Pastor, WHC