

THE FIRST *Christmas* GATHERING

Week 1: December 6-12

10min Welcome / Introduce Guests / Share Life
Recall the Guidelines / Open in Prayer

2min **Share the Vision:** *In small group, we want to cultivate "...strong, spiritually healthy disciples who can make disciples..."* Brandon Guindon (Disciple Making Culture)

5min **Hook Question:** When have you been amazed at an event that took place?

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

2min In last week's story, we learned about the birth of the forerunner to Jesus, John the Baptist. John was filled with the Spirit even when he was in his mother's womb. In his lifetime he would turn many hearts towards God to "make ready for the Lord a people prepared." (Luke 1:17)

Gabriel was an angel sent by God to bring messages about the Messiah. When Gabriel appeared to people, it was powerful, and fear would overcome those who saw him. His first appearance was to the prophet Daniel. He told Daniel that the Messiah would come in the fullness of time and be killed. The second time Gabriel appears in the Bible, he is revealed to John's father, Zechariah. When he told Zechariah that he would have a son who would prepare the way for the Messiah, Zechariah did not believe him. As a result, Gabriel told Zechariah that he stood in the presence of God and that God sent him to bring Zechariah this good news. Because of Zechariah's disbelief, Gabriel made him mute.

In today's story God had another great message for Gabriel to deliver. It has been six months since Gabriel visited Zechariah. Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, are six months pregnant with their son, John. When Gabriel appears to a young lady named Mary, she is troubled, but she also tries to discern who could be talking to her. This is where our story begins...

Tell the story from Luke 1:26-45: *Remember to change up the storyteller often.*

12min **Rebuild the story:** *Group members retell the story based on what they remember.*

Read the story from Luke 1:26-45: *Ask the group to read these verses.*

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

- Head Questions: Quicker tempo.
- What stands out the most to you about this story?
 - What does this story teach us about ourselves?
 - What does this story teach us about God?
- Heart & Hand Questions: Slow down & wait!
- If you were Mary, how would you respond to the message Gabriel brought?
 - What is God speaking to you about through this story?
 - Who could retell the story for us? **CHALLENGE:** Tell the story to someone this week!

Ask for a volunteer storyteller for next week. Close in prayer.