



## Christmas Message - *An Imperfect Christmas*

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### Message to Conversation Guide

#### Discussion Questions

1. In the National Lampoon Christmas Vacation starring Chevy Chase we see an idealized dream of the perfect Christmas. Clark Griswold (Chevy Chase) tries to produce the perfect Christmas yet everything blows up in his face. Have you ever tried to create the perfect Christmas experience for your family, but circumstances tried to sabotage your efforts?
2. Below are listed some of the things that we seek to make perfect of Christmas. Can you think of other things that we strive to make perfect at Christmas?
  - *Perfect Christmas Meal.*
  - *Perfect Desert.*
  - *Perfect Decorations.*
  - *Perfect Party.*
  - *Perfect Relationships.*
3. In the movie National Lampoon Christmas Vacation cousin Eddie and his family shows up in the rusted-out RV. He is a strange character. Our relatives may not all be strange but there may be some strained relationships in our family relationships at Christmas why is this particularly painful at Christmas time?
4. Why is it important who we “see” at Christmas? Discuss how when we make Christmas about not seeing our own version of cousin Eddie but about seeing Jesus how that can make a huge difference in our Christmas experience. Read the verses about the first Christmas characters seeing Jesus.

#### **Luke 2:15**

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem **and see this thing** that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

#### **Matt 2:9-12**

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, **they saw the child** with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. NIV, 2011

5. How does **Heb 12:1-2** verse in Hebrews underscore the principle of the most important person to see at Christmas is Jesus?
6. When you resign from being a *personality renovator* and accept people as they are it can be a huge burden off of your chest. Read and discuss the relationship verses below?

**Rom 12:18**

18 **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.** NIV, 2011

7. The first Christmas was filled with pain, suffering and even death just as the world around us is filled pain, suffering and death. Read this portion of the Christmas story in Matthew and consider the pain, suffering and death that was in the world at the first Christmas.

**Matt 2:16-18**

16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.

17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

18 "A voice is heard in Ramah,  
weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children  
and refusing to be comforted,  
because they are no more." NIV, 2011

8. Discuss these verses about the resurrection of Jesus.

**John 11:25-27**

25 Jesus said to her, **"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.** Do you believe this?" 27 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." NIV, 2011  
(also see **1 Cor 15:54-58**)

9. The manger scene was probably not what Mary expected but she was born in disappointing surroundings and a place where she did not expect Christ to be born. How can we find Jesus in our disappointing places?
10. Discuss how it is in our power and control to determine how we view Christmas and how we can find incredible beauty in a Christmas that isn't perfect.