

Literacy Check

- **Matthew 2:13-23** - Joseph, Mary, and Jesus flee to Egypt
- **Jeremiah 31:15** - Prophecy about infanticide
- **Hosea 11:1** - Prophecy about Jesus coming out of Egypt

Let's Break the Ice

Which birthday party that you've had has been your favorite?

Introduction

We have a tendency to focus on the now. As Daniel said on Sunday, "Now" shouts louder, is in your face, distracts us, and convinces us to focus on it rather than on eternity and our relationship with God.

Meanwhile, eternity lasts longer and causes positive change in you and those around you. "Now might be louder, but later is longer."

Heads Up!

Think of an example from when you (or someone whose story you can share) chose a possession, position, or passion over a person. Basically: share a time with your group when you sacrificed a relationship for something that was temporary.

Also, get to know some of the cast in this week's scripture. Before group, spend some time to learn more about people like King Herod, Joseph and Mary, the magi, and even Matthew (the author).

Getting to know the people in what you're reading can help you gain context on their actions and helps the Bible come alive as you read it. It can also help when additional insights during the group discussion would be helpful and illuminative.

Things to Discuss

Invite your group to discuss some of the elements that stand out with regards to Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fleeing from Israel to Egypt. Use the guiding questions to help conversation along if you need help (What would the original audience think of this passage? Is there an example to follow? Is there a promise to claim or sin to avoid?).

What does your group think about Herod's reaction to a new king being born? No one would argue that Herod's reaction wasn't monstrous, but was it unexpected? Herod clearly valued his passion, position, and possessions more than the lives of those children. This next turn in conversation could be tough: what does your group value? Are there possessions or positions that are taking up an inordinate amount of headspace? Has anyone in the group chosen a position, passion, or possession over a person? If conversation is stalling, now is a good time to share your example.

Transition to positive: Encourage your group to discuss and commit to leveraging the temporary for eternity. It's all about relationships so focus the conversation on using our nows to bless other's eternity.

Wrapping Up

Rejoice always, never stop praying, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ~1 Thess 5:16-18

