

Ice Breaker

During Christmas time, do you prefer to wrap presents or hang lights?

Biblical Focus

READ THE WEEKLY VERSES TOGETHER

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

Matthew 1:18-23 (NLT)

Discussion Questions

- In the days of Jesus, becoming pregnant outside of marriage was an extremely shameful crime that could be punished with death. What do you think Mary and Joseph felt and experienced in those nine months of pregnancy before they were married?
- Both Mary and Joseph were separately commanded by the angels not to fear. Why do you think avoiding fear was so important?
- God could have chosen ANY name to be known when He came to earth. Why do you think He chose "Immanuel" which means "God with us"?
- How does being reminded of God's presence, purpose and plan bring you hope in this Christmas season?

Prayer Focus

TAKE PRAYER REQUESTS!

Ask the group to share prayer requests. After requests are shared, follow one of the following two options:

Option A: If most of your group is comfortable with praying out loud, split into groups of two or three and have them pray for each other individually.

Option B: If the majority of your group is not yet comfortable with praying out loud, simply lead the entire group in praying over each request. Don't hurry! Let the Holy Spirit move and speak in His timing!

(PRAYER TIP: Ask what people experienced during the prayer time. If they received a mental picture, word, or feeling during prayer, many times that is God! Encourage others to share what they experience.)

Want More?

Spend time with Jesus by doing the following exercise, either in your LifeGroup OR on your own during the week:

Step 1) Read Romans 15:13 slowly at least 2 or 3 times until a word, or a phrase, seems to be highlighted or "jumps off the page."

May God, the source of hope, fill you with joy and peace through your faith in him. Then you will overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 (GW)

Step 2) What word or phrase is God highlighting to you?

Step 3) Spend time turning those phrases or words God highlighted to you back into prayers.