



# onechurch.tv

## bigIdea small group discussion

Ever felt the chaos of Christmas? Things that start off so beautiful become terrorizing and terrifying by the end of the season. The songs you love to sing become annoying. The food you look forward to eating you get sick of. The parties you been anticipating become a burden. Is that how you want to spend this Christmas? Do you think that this is how God wants you to spend this Christmas?

To understand all that God did through the birth of His son Jesus to radically change and redeem our story. God gave us a whole new way to live, to love, and have relationship with him and others—all through the birth of a little baby, born in a forgotten town, to a teenage mother.

This week, we learn that God demonstrated his love for us by entering into our human story and giving us a better story with him.



**BIG IDEA:** *What would you do if you knew God was with you?*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Chris said that there was a significant time in history where there was very little evidence of God's presence. Right before the Christmas story, the nation of Israel experienced 450 years of silence from God. Complete the following sentence: When God seems silent; I tend to react by \_\_\_\_\_. What causes you to react in this way?
2. Talk about a time when God was silent in your life. How did you respond?

Chris looked at 3 scenes from the Christmas story as he asked this question:  
*What would you do if you knew God was with you?*

#### *Scene #1*

3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Luke 1:26-56.*
4. How does Gabriel's word to Mary compare to his word to Zechariah? (1:13-17) How does Mary (1:34, 38) respond differently than Zechariah (1:12, 18)?
5. After 450 years, why is it ironic that an angel would talk to Mary to break the silence?
6. What truths about Jesus are emphasized here? What expectations must have been raised in Mary? What risks is she asked to take?
7. Mary has her life turned upside down with this announcement. How do you respond when your life gets turned upside down? Positively or negatively?
8. Mary knew what was ahead of her—a teenager getting pregnant outside of marriage; seeing angels and hearing voices. Mary could have responded negatively. But she didn't respond that way. Her response to God as a teenager humbles the most religiously proud people in the world. How did she respond? (1:46-55)
9. When times get tough for you and life throws you a curveball, did you respond by singing to God?
10. For what does Mary praise God in this song?

#### *Scene #2*

11. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Matthew 1:18-25.*
12. How would you feel if you were in Joseph's place in verse 19? In verses 20-21? What would you say to family and friends? To God?
13. What Old Testament passage did the angel quote in verse 23?
14. What do you learn about the faith of Joseph from this passage?

Lord of Lords  
Wonderful Counselor

### Scene #3

15. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Luke 2:6-14.* In verse 7, most translations read ‘there was no room for them in the *inn*.’ What did Chris say about how to translate the word *inn*?

The view that Joseph and Mary simply arrived late to Bethlehem and accommodations at the local hotel were full is incorrect. The word translated as *inn* is the Greek word *kataluma*, which is translated as *guest room*, which gives an all new spin to this familiar Christmas story.

It’s not that Joseph and Mary were *late* to town, but that they were *rejected* by their family. They had family members in town—that’s the reason they returned to Bethlehem for the census. But when they got there, the scandal of this unwed teenager having a baby caused their own extended family to turn Joseph and Mary away. Their own extended family wouldn’t even allow them in their house!

16. In the midst of this scandal, how does God prove Himself to Mary and Joseph?  
17. In making His first announcement of Jesus’ birth to the shepherds, how did God fulfill the prophecy found in Isaiah 61:1?  
18. In Jewish social and religious circles, how were shepherds viewed?  
19. If you were going to announce the Savior of the world, to whom would you have announced it? Religious leaders? Yuppies? The powerful? Those in charge?  
20. When facing a crisis, how have you experienced Jesus as *Emmanuel*—God with us?  
21. How can you begin to prepare your heart to hear God’s voice this holiday season?

### MOVING FORWARD

Could it be that the gift of this first Christmas—that the gift of every Christmas—is simply *God with us*. That is the gift of Christmas. *God with us*. If you want to sum up the whole Christmas story, you can do it in 3 words. The gift of Christmas is *God with us*. No matter how you are coming in to this season, this is truth that can transform this Christmas for you. Can transform your life. **What would you do if you knew that God was with you this Christmas?**

### CHANGING YOUR MIND

“*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 1:21-23

Wonderful Counselor  
Almighty God  
Everlasting Father  
Prince of Peace