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bigIdea small group discussion

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.

Today, we're learning that Jesus came to send us into the world. And to do THROUGH us things FOR and WITH him that draw the world's eyes to him.



BIG IDEA: What is your life reflecting right now?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you were growing up, how big was your family on putting up outdoor Christmas lights?
2. On your tree (or on your tree growing up), what do you prefer: white or colored lights? Blinking or non-blinking?
3. Are you comfortable in the lime-light? Or are you more at ease back stage?
4. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Genesis 1:1-5 and John 1:1-18.*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day. Genesis 1:1, 3-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-5, 9-10, 14

5. John roots the opening verses of his Gospel in the opening verses of Genesis. Compare John 1:1-5 with Genesis 1:1-5. What parallels do you see, and what do these parallels teach us about the message John wants his readers to hear?

Another similarity between the beginnings of Genesis and the beginnings of John is that Genesis 1 records the first 7 days of creation. The beginnings of John records the first 7 days of Jesus' ministry.

6. The Gospel of John has a different starting place than any other Gospels. Look briefly at the opening verses of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. What is unique about the opening of John's Gospel?
7. John 1:14 makes clear that when John speaks of *The Word*, he is speaking of Jesus. So John begins his Gospel by providing a lofty portrait of Jesus: revealing that Jesus is God, giving glimpses of the Trinitarian nature of God, and teaching us that Jesus was crucially involved in the very creation of the universe. List everything we learn about Jesus in John 1:1-18.
8. Continuing to draw upon Genesis motifs, John speaks about Jesus as the *life* and *light* who has come to shine in a dark world. What do John 8:12 and 10:10 teach us about the *life* and *light* we receive in Jesus?
9. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Matthew 5:14-16.* Jesus says His followers are the light of the world. What does Jesus tell His listeners to do and not to do as we live our light-filled lives?

Lord of Lords
Wonderful Counselor

Have you ever woken up at night and been in utter darkness? Can you remember moving slowly, cautiously, apprehensively forward as you reached out trying to find a light switch? Do you remember the blanket of darkness covering you? Do you remember when you finally found the switch, flipped it, and felt peace as the room was flooded with light?

Light illuminates dark places and helps us see where we need to go. It takes away fear and allows us to move ahead with confidence. Christians are called to be light in a world addicted to darkness. We are to let our good deeds reflect the goodness of a great God. When the radiance of Jesus fills our lives, we naturally reflect this light to those around us. As God's light bearers, we are called to make sure nothing keeps His light from continuing to shine in our lives.

10. There are many parallels between light and Christians. Take time as a group to list as many as you can think of. Reflect on the many properties and uses for light and see how many connections you can draw.

MOVING FORWARD

Describe a life situation you are in right now where there is a great deal of darkness. How is God calling you and using you to be His light in this situation, and how can your small group members support you in this ministry?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16

Wonderful Counselor
Almighty God
Everlasting Father
Prince of Peace