

NETFLIXMAS

The Polar Express Small Group Discussion Guide

**BIG IDEA: Faith is not the absence of doubt.
Faith is pursuing God despite your doubts.**

In the movie, the Polar Express, a magical train takes several children to the North Pole to rebuild their faith in Santa. Faith in Santa and faith in God are a lot alike. They deteriorate for many of the same reasons. Through the themes of this movie and the story of John the Baptist, we will learn some key things about faith and doubt.

KEY PASSAGES: (excerpts from the story of John the Baptist)

*People from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the vicinity of the Jordan were flocking to him (John).
(Matthew 3:5)*

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the One I told you about: 'After me comes a man who has surpassed me, because He existed before me.' I didn't know Him, but I came baptizing with water so He might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I watched the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He rested on Him. I didn't know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The One you see the Spirit descending and resting on — He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and testified that He is the Son of God!" (John 1:29-34)

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent a message by his disciples and asked Him, "Are You the One who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matthew 11:2-3)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Just a simple show of hands: who grew up believing in Santa?
 - What did your parents do to try to convince you Santa was real?
 - How did you come to learn that Santa wasn't real?
- Just a simple show of hands: who has ever struggled in their faith?
- Make a List: List all the ways you think people begin to doubt their faith.
- Share: for those who are willing, share one of your faith struggles, including what caused you to struggle and how you worked through it.

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- What doubts do you still have about faith?
- What things give your faith strength, even in the face of doubts?
- Do you feel prepared for season of doubt like John the Baptist experienced? Why or why not?
- If you enter a season of Doubt, how will you try to work through it?

THE CHALLENGE:

**Spend as much time building your faith
as you do building Christmas this season.**

GET PERSONAL

How can you pursue God and build your faith this season?

1. Do you need to Believe?
Have you crossed the line of faith and started a relationship with Jesus? What is holding you back?
2. Do you need to Learn?
Are you a faith “know it all” who is living out a list of facts and rules, rather than talking with God and being ready for Him to guide your day or learning in unexpected directions?
3. Do you need to Depend on others more?
Are you struggling in times of isolation, not having someone to encourage you or discuss your doubts with?
4. Do you need to Lead others?
Is your faith walk good...it just lacks the excitement and the rewarding thrill of seeing others grow in their faith?