

Dear Life Group Leaders,

Welcome to our penultimate Life Group Guide of the year! This week we start a new mini-series looking at the Christmas story. What a wonderful time of year this is as we get to remember that God himself stepped in to our darkness. Today we explore the stories of two remarkable women. I hope you're able to enjoy learning from their examples of responding to God with trust and in obedience.

God bless and happy Christmas!

Andy *(This week's Life Group Guide was prepared by Andy Tuck, who works for our Wimbledon venue)*

LIFE GROUP GUIDE

Luke 1:26-56

Our passage today follows part of Mary and Elizabeth's stories. They've got loads to teach us about trusting God and obeying him.

Please read Luke 1:26-38

1. We're jumping in to the middle of Luke's narrative about the first Christmas. Can anyone summarise what has happened so far in Luke's Gospel?
[Leaders note: Zechariah and Elizabeth have been promised a baby boy, and told to call him John.]
2. v26-27, can you spot any repeated words in these verses? What is Luke emphasising to his readers?
3. v28-34, what does the angel promise to Mary, and what is her response?
4. v35, why is the virgin birth such an important part of our understanding of who Jesus is?
[Leaders note: Though Jesus was a genuine human being, he did not inherit a sinful nature and disposition from Adam, as all other human beings do. E.g. 2 Cor 5:21 and 1 John 3:15.]
5. v36-37, what do these verses have to say about God's faithfulness? How would these words of the angel strengthened Mary?
6. v38, in what ways is Mary an example to us of how we should respond to God?

Please read Luke 1:39-45

7. v39-40, why might Mary have hurried to see Elizabeth?
8. v41-45, how would you describe the emotions expressed in these verses? How would have this meeting encouraged both women as they carried such important children?

Please read Luke 1:46-56

9. Work through Mary's song verse by verse. What does she praise and thank God for?
10. Think back over your year. If you had to compose a song of thanks to God, what would you praise him for?