

Dear Life Group Leaders,

Welcome to our ultimate Life Group Guide of the year! This week we're looking at part of Joseph's story as part of our mini-series looking at the Christmas story. In today's passage we encounter some of the main themes of the Christmas story. These are wonderful things to be treasured and pondered as we progress through Advent. Life Group Guides will return in January 2023 when we start a new series looking at our Vision and Values. 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

Matthew 1:18-25

Our passage today follows part of Joseph's story.

Please read Matthew 1:18-25

1. v18-19, do you think Joseph was justified in his decision to divorce Mary? What does it tell us about him that he wanted this to be done quietly?
2. v20-21, let's look in detail at what the angel said to Joseph in his dream.
 - a. What is significant about how the angel addresses Joseph?
 - b. What does he learn about Mary's pregnancy?
 - c. What does Jesus' name mean?
 - d. What is Jesus' purpose?
3. Put yourself in to Joseph shoes. What do you think he understood by this encounter with the angel?
[Leaders note: Even if he didn't understand all the details of how this was all to happen, it's clear that he knew God was unveiling his salvation plan and that this baby boy had a key role to play in that drama.]
4. v22-23, here Matthew includes an editorial note. What further detail does he give us? What more does this quote from Isaiah tell us about who this baby boy will be?
5. v24-25, what was Joseph's response to what the Lord has revealed to him? How is he a model for us in how we should respond to God?
[Leaders note: Joseph responds in obedience. He believed God, and so took Mary home as his wife and name the baby boy Jesus, just as the angel had told him to do.]
6. What two things is Matthew highlighting to us through these names and their meanings?
[Leaders note: That Jesus came to rescue us. That God wants to be with us.]
7. Take time to apply these two things to your lives right now.
 - a. Are there any sins you need to confess and repent of?
 - b. In what areas of your life to you need to acknowledge that God is with you?

Some prayer points you might want to finish on:

- For those in your group who are in need this Christmas time.
- For local Foodbanks and other provisions that will help people in need in our communities this winter.
- For our upcoming Christmas services and Alpha courses.