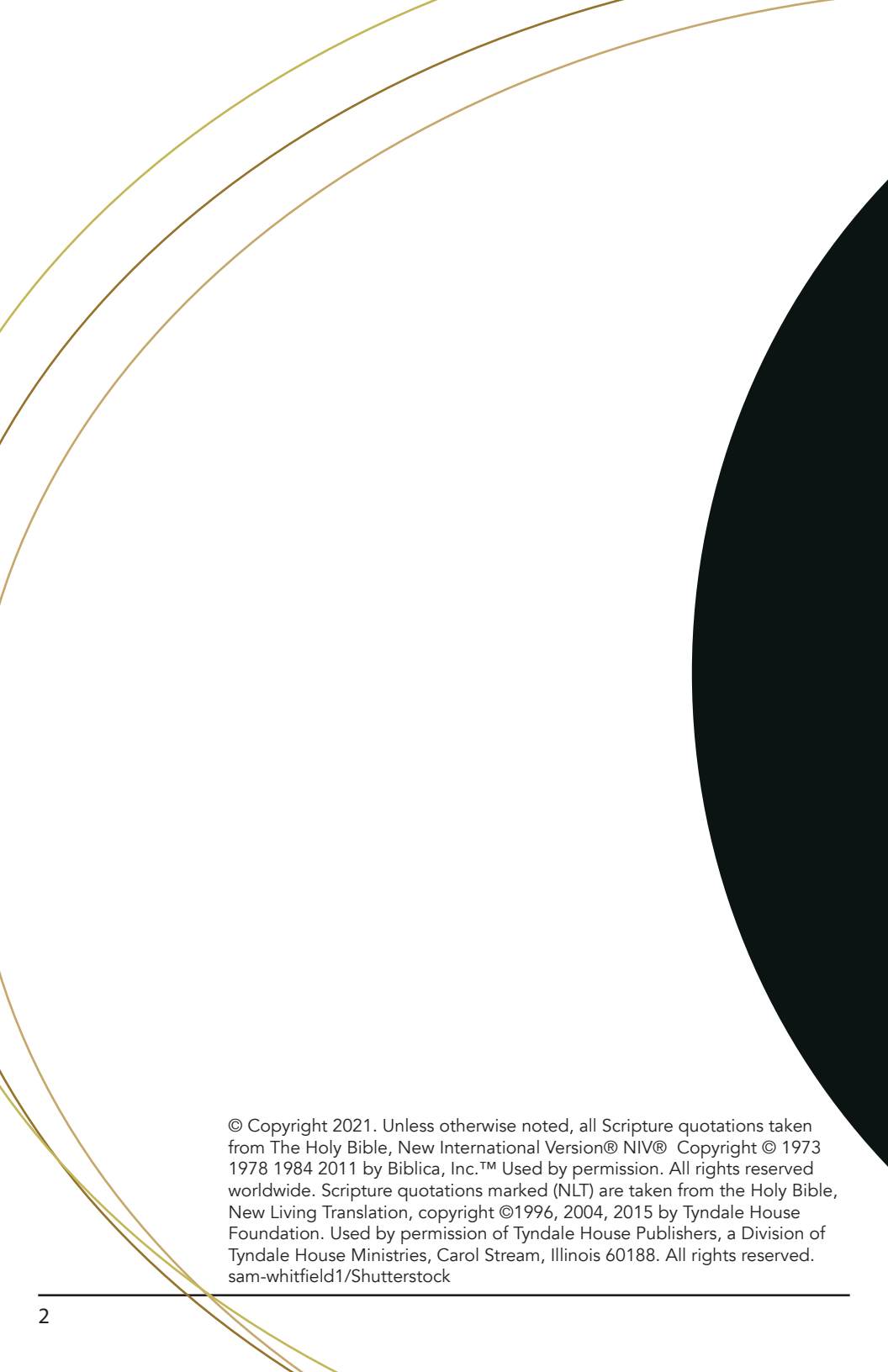


3 WEEKS

WHO NEEDS
CHRISTMAS?



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THE WORLD

WEEK 1 SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

How do you feel heading into this Christmas season? Is this a positive or challenging time for you?

Big Idea:

The Christmas story began 2000 years before the story of Mary and Joseph and the birth of Christ, and it continues 2000 years after his birth.

Key Scriptures:

Genesis 12:1-3

"The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Isaiah 49:6

"...he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

Isaiah 9:2,6

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has

dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Malachi 1:11

"My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations," says the Lord Almighty."

Discussion:

The Christmas story didn't begin with shepherds watching over their flocks, wise men following a star, and a young couple that couldn't find a place to have their baby. It began much earlier than that, and it was more epic than anyone could have imagined.

It began with God making an unbelievable, incoherent, and impossible promise to a man named Abram (later Abraham). That promise carried through the entire history of ancient Israel and beyond.

1. When you think about the Christmas story, do you find it difficult to believe the
2. details surrounding Jesus' birth? Why or why not?
3. Read Genesis 12:1–3. In what ways does God's promise to Abraham connect to the arrival of Jesus? How does it impact your view of the Christmas story?
4. Read Isaiah 49:6 and 9:2,6. What does it mean for the people of Israel to be a light for the Gentiles? How did Jesus fulfill that?
5. What insight do these two passages give you about the Christmas story and God's providence and sovereignty in the world?
6. Through Christmas we are reminded, in the most

THE WORLD

remarkable way imaginable, that God is active even when it seems like he's not. That God, even when He is silent, is not still. And through this remarkable story we are reminded on a personal level that God is interested in the affairs of mankind. That God doesn't think just in terms of nations, but God thinks in terms of individuals. And that God sent his Son, not simply to be the Savior of the world, but the Savior of you in your world. Talk about a time when God seemed silent or distant in your life. What happened?

6. What did that experience do for your faith?
7. Read Malachi 1:11. How has this prophecy been fulfilled in these days, despite the seeming insanity of it when it was given?

Wrapping It Up:

What can you do this season to focus on the meaning of the Christmas story to our culture and in your life?

Prayer Focus:

Pray for those in our community and in the world who desperately need to experience the blessing that Jesus brings.

DID

WHO NEEDS
CHRISTMAS?

MEMORY VERSE:

*"I will bless those who
bless you, and whoever
curses you I will curse; and
all peoples on earth will be
blessed through you."*

Genesis 12:3

GOD

WEEK 2 SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Talk about a time you had trouble convincing someone else of something you knew to be true. What did you say?

Big Idea:

God needed Christmas in order to communicate to His children His unfathomable love for them.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 1:20-23

"But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us")."

Galatians 4:4-7

"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir."

Romans 5:6-8

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Discussion:

God sent Jesus to be with us, so we could know He is for us.

1. Read Matthew 1:20—23.
How does this passage give insight to the purpose of Jesus’ birth?
2. Read Galatians 4:4–7.
God’s provision through the Christmas story has transformed those who believe from slaves to children of God. How does this fit in God’s big story?
3. During the message, Pastor Jeff said, “The events of Christmas would be unbelievable if the story wasn’t so remarkable.” Do you find the Christmas story unbelievable or remarkable? Why?
4. What are some of the things that have shaped your view of Christmas? What role does Scripture play when it comes to your beliefs?
5. Read Romans 5:6–8. It’s nearly impossible to think about Jesus’ birth without thinking about His death and resurrection. What are some truths about God that you wouldn’t know if Jesus hadn’t demonstrated them?
6. During the message, Pastor Jeff said, “Jesus’ death demonstrated the magnitude of our ingratitude and the magnitude of his love for us.” How does the love that God demonstrated through Jesus birth, life, death and resurrection impact you?
7. Is it difficult for you to believe God loves you that much? Why or why not?

GOD

Wrapping It Up:

Discuss what can you do this Christmas season to show gratitude for God's choice to demonstrate his love for you.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for those who are grieving the loss of loved ones and who will be experiencing Christmas without them this year.

DID

WHO NEEDS
CHRISTMAS?

MEMORY VERSE:

"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship."

Galatians 4:4

WEEK 3 SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What is one of your favorite Christmas memories? Why is it special to you?

Big Idea:

Jesus came not to simply forgive our sins but to save us from the power of sin. He came to set us free.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 1:20-22

"But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

John 10:10

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Romans 6:12-14

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."

DO

WHO NEEDS CHRISTMAS?

Discussion:

1. Read Matthew 1:20-22. What purpose does God give for Jesus' birth and name?
2. Share a time when you got yourself into a situation where you literally had to be rescued or saved by someone.
3. When you think about what Jesus came to do, do you think more of being forgiven or being rescued from sin?
4. Read John 10:10. What do you think Jesus means when He says He wants you to have life to the full? What does that entail?
5. How do you observe the enemy trying to steal, kill and destroy?
6. Read Romans 6: 12–14. Describe a time when sin reigned in your mortal body and you obeyed its evil desires.
7. What do you think it would look like for you to "offer yourself to God"? How would your daily life be different?
8. What can you do to remind

yourself that you need not be mastered by sin because Jesus has set you free?

Wrapping It Up:

Discuss what can you do this Christmas season to show gratitude for God's choice to demonstrate his love for you.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for those who are grieving the loss of loved ones and who will be experiencing Christmas without them this year.

MEMORY VERSE:

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Matthew 1:22

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
- Childcare _____
- When we will meet (day of week) _____
- Where we will meet (place) _____
- We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be _____
- Date of this agreement _____
- Date we will review this agreement again _____
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____



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