



Discussion Guide — 12/24/2025

Series: *Around the Manger: Stories of Advent*

Message: *Traveler's Story*

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20 (NRSVUE)

Opening Prayer

God of the journey, You meet us on crowded roads and quiet nights. As travelers once heard and were amazed, open our ears and hearts tonight. Lead us from hearing to believing, from believing to rejoicing, and from rejoicing to sharing. Amen.

Introduction & Context

Luke sets Jesus' birth inside real history—emperors, governors, census, travel. Families return to ancestral towns; guest rooms fill; a baby is laid in a manger. Shepherds hear heaven's announcement and hurry to see. Travelers in Bethlehem hear the shepherds' report and "are amazed" (2:18). Christmas is God's light breaking into ordinary movement—lines, lodgings, and long walks home.

Read Aloud: Luke 2:1–20

Discussion Questions

1. **Empire, Census, and the Road (vv. 1–5)**
 - What do the census and required travel reveal about life under Rome?
 - Where do you feel "counted" by systems but unseen as a person? How does Christmas speak into that?
2. **No Place, A Manger (vv. 6–7)**
 - What strikes you about the contrast between "no place in the guest room" and God making room in a manger?
 - How might this detail reshape our imagination of where God loves to show up?





3. Good News for All (vv. 8–14)

- The angel names “good news of great joy for all the people.” Who might have doubted they were included? Who doubts it today?
- How do “glory to God” and “peace on earth” belong together in our city’s current moment?

4. Let Us Go Now (vv. 15–16)

- The shepherds move from hearing to going “with haste.” What helps you take a concrete next step after you hear good news?

5. Amazed Travelers, Treasuring Mary (vv. 17–19)

- The travelers who heard were “amazed,” and Mary “treasured and pondered.” Where do you resonate more tonight—amazement or pondering? Why?
- What does faithful “pondering” look like in the week after Christmas?

6. Returning Changed (v. 20)

- The shepherds return to their fields glorifying God. What would it look like for you to “return” to work/home tomorrow with a changed posture?

7. Head • Heart • Hands

- **Head:** What does Luke want us to know about who Jesus is by placing the story among travelers and shepherds?
- **Heart:** What part of this story touches your longing or fear tonight?
- **Hands:** If you wrote a six-word Christmas memoir this year, what would it be?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, born among travelers and told by shepherds, be born in us tonight. Give us the courage to welcome You, the grace to carry Your peace, and the joy to share Your good news on the road ahead. Amen.

Key Takeaway

Christmas meets us on the move: God makes room where there is none, turns hearers into witnesses, and sends us home with praise.



Next Step — P.A.R. (Pray • Act • Reflect)

Pray:

“Christ, make room in me.” Thank God for one concrete sign of His presence this Advent, and ask for one person to bless this week.

Act: *(choose one you can do before New Year’s)*

- **Hospitality:** make room—invite a neighbor, coworker, or traveler-at-heart to your table or to a service.
- **Encouragement:** share a personal six-word Christmas memoir with someone and ask for theirs.
- **Witness:** tell one person—in simple words—why this story is good news for you; invite them to worship.
- **Care on the Road:** bless someone “in motion” (delivery driver, service worker, traveler) with a note, snack, or prayer.

Reflect:

Where did you sense amazement or peace this week? How did you “return” differently to ordinary life? What new space will you keep open for Jesus and others in the weeks ahead?

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