

Advent: Good News, Great Joy, All People
“A Google Maps View of Christmas”
Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Question (get everyone involved in discussion):

- ❖ What is one experience that made you feel small? (Examples: looking at some wonder of creation, or being in a huge crowd at Times Square, etc.).
- ❖ Begin your time together with a moment of silence, then pray and ask for God’s Spirit to reveal himself through his word.

1. **Read Luke 2:1-7 several times:** read it out loud as a group once. Then read it out loud again in a different translation. Lastly, read it silently as individuals. Then discuss the following.

- Did you notice anything new or fresh in this reading of the passage?
- What questions did this reading raise?
- What psychological impact would a worldwide census have had on Caesar Augustus? What impact would it have had on common people, like Mary and Joseph?
- Which of God’s promises is Caesar unwittingly enabling to be fulfilled? There are at least two, maybe more. (Read Micah 5:2 and 2 Samuel 7:12-13 for details).
- **Application:** what people, circumstances, or current events cause you to feel that God’s plans are threatened, or God is not able to carry out his purposes in your life?
- On Sunday, Josh said that in this story, we see how **God is working over and through the events of history to save the world.**
 - Does this principle bring you any comfort? Why or why not?
 - How do we see the same principle playing out in the crucifixion of Jesus? (See Acts 4:27-28).

2. **Zoom in on Mary and Joseph for a few minutes.** What factors in their lives— in the eyes of Jewish culture and the rest of the world—make them unlikely candidates to give birth to the Savior of the world?

- On Sunday, Pastor Josh discussed several details of this Nativity story that our Christian Culture has muddled a bit. How did that discussion strike you?
- The point of this discussion was that God gave the gift that would fulfill his ancient promises and save the world in the least expected, most mundane of circumstances.
 - Do you think that this point has any relevance to us today? Why or why not?
 - What similarities can you see between the manner in which Jesus came into the world, and the manner he gave his life to save the world?
- The big takeaway from the sermon was that **in the ordinary routines of life, God does extraordinary things.**
 - Do you think that this is an accurate conclusion to draw from the story? Why or why not?
 - What aspects of your life make it seem that God could not do anything significant through you?

- What do you think that you would have to do in order to be used in God's world-changing plans?
- How might your daily existence change if you really believed that God does his most impactful work through ordinary people and circumstances?

Prayer:

- Pray about any themes, insights, or challenges that have arisen through the discussion.
- Take a moment to share, and pray for any other needs that exist among your group members.