

THE BIRTH OF THE KING

April 15, 2018

ICEBREAKER - What are specific things for which we can give God praise today? Share them, and then let's offer God thanks through simple prayers saying, "Thank you, God, for ..."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you remember the first few words of the first chapter of The Story? If not, turn back and read them...then, read the start of this chapter. The Jews in Jesus' day had read and heard the story over and over through their lives. What would have come to their minds when the story of Jesus (the solution to all our problems) began with the same words that started The Story, back before there was any sin in the world?
2. Various titles and descriptions of Jesus are included in his story (John 1:1-14; The Story, pp. 309-310). Pick one of the following and explain what you think it means and how you have experienced this to be true of Jesus:
 1. Jesus: The Word
 2. Jesus: Is God
 3. Jesus: The Maker of all things
 4. Jesus: The Life
 5. Jesus: The Light
 6. The one and only Son
 7. The one who brings grace and truth
3. God spoke to both Mary and Joseph through angels (Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:19-24; The Story, pp. 310-312). What was the angel's message and how did Mary and Joseph respond to this heavenly messenger?
4. Pause to remember that Mary and Joseph were real people living in a real small town. How might Joseph's family and the townspeople have responded when Mary turned up pregnant before the wedding day? How might they have reacted to the "An angel told me that God would make me pregnant, but Joseph and I are still virgins" story? Tell about a time that God called you to live for him or follow him in a way that others did not understand. How did you hold to your faith during this time?
5. Jesus was born of a virgin and was conceived without sin. Why does this matter?
6. In the Lower Story Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem to be counted in the census; it was a hard three-day journey for someone nine months pregnant. In the Upper Story God was getting them to Bethlehem because that is where the Messiah was to be born. Recall an event in your life that seemed inconvenient and unnecessary, only to later look back and realize God was doing something greater than you knew at the time.
7. After Jesus was born, the shepherds hurried off and told everyone what they had seen and heard. Share a brief testimony about a time you really saw and heard Jesus move in your life. How might you share this story (and others like it) outside your small group...with people who are not yet followers of Jesus?
8. Jesus is Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23; The Story, p. 312). As you walk with Jesus your Savior, how does it help you to know that he is God and that he is with you...all the time? In what situation do you need to be reminded that God is with you? How can your small group members pray for you as you walk through this season of your life?

READ FOR NEXT SESSION - Take time before your next group meeting to read chapter 23 of The Story.

PRAYER TIME - Take prayer requests