

SERIES BIG IDEA:

Jesus comes into the pain of my story to bring me hope, joy, and peace, because He loves me.

TEACHING BIG IDEA:

I can have hope in my pain because I am certain that God is with me.

TEACHING SUMMARY:

The season of Christmas often reminds us of our own pain and uncertainty, which can destroy hope, joy, and peace. Our actual experiences often don't align with our ideas of what a storybook Christmas is. Jesus understands our pain and uncertainty because he was born into humanity and directly experienced the pain and uncertainty of being human. God came as Jesus to be one of us so He could be with us. As a result there is hope, even in pain, because we can be certain that God is with us. Embracing "God with me" means we have hope that God's grace will sustain us, that God's life defeats all death, and that God understands my reality. Truly, "God with me" is hope for me.

TALK IT OVER (DISCUSS ONE OR MORE):

Share and briefly describe one of your favorite Christmas movies. Describe your idea of a "storybook" Christmas. How has your experience of past Christmases aligned (or not) with these storybook ideas?

What is your pain? What are current uncertainties in your life? How can the Christmas season contribute to pain and uncertainty?

How can God really understand our pain and uncertainty? What is the evidence that God understands?

How can you know that God is with you? Explain how knowing that God is with you can give you hope in areas of your life that you have experienced pain and uncertainty.

How can having confidence that God is with me give me hope that God's grace will sustain me? ... that God's life defeats all death? ... that God understands my reality?

Who can you share this hope with? Begin with Prayer; Listen to their pain and uncertainty; Eat with them; Serve them; and Share your Jesus Story with them. BLESS them! Share a name and pray for them now.

OTHER SCRIPTURES TO READ:

Matthew 28:19-20 (with a focus on the last line)

John 14:15-17

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

1 Peter 1:3-6