

CROSSWALK GROUP GUIDE

CHRISTMAS CAROL - WEEK 1

CHRISTMAS PAST

INTRODUCTION

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion between you and the person you're studying with or with your Connect Group. Feel free to add, subtract, or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN QUESTIONS

What is one of your favorite Christmas traditions from back when you were a kid?

HEAD & HEART

1. Read Ephesians 1:3-5, I Peter 1:18-20, together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading.
2. What does it mean to you that God loved and chose you even before He made the world?
3. Do you think God knew we would sin and so he had a plan, or was he playing it safe?
4. Read Genesis 1:1-3a and 26-27, Genesis 2:9-17, Genesis 1:31, Genesis 3:8-15, together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading.
5. What do you think it must have been like for Adam and Eve before Genesis 3?
6. When we get to the conversation with the serpent, why would Eve entertain doubt in God?
7. Describe what you think was going through God's mind when he asked the question, "What have you done?"
8. Read Hebrews 10:1, Deuteronomy 18:17-18, together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading.
9. The Old Testament continues to offer shadows of what's to come. What are some of those things that happen in the OT that are repeated as the story continues?
10. How is the story of the Exodus like the story of Jesus? Moses like Jesus?
11. Read Isaiah 7:14, 9:2, 6-7, Isaiah 53:5-6 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading.
12. What gives you hope in these verses?
13. Can you see why the religious leaders of Jesus' time were looking for a warrior to overthrow the government instead of a Messiah coming to establish a heavenly kingdom by laying down His life? How do you and I stay open to what God is up to, even when it's not what we imagined in the first place?
14. God has always been on a rescue mission to save us. How does looking at Christmas past in this way, impact how you live your life, today?

HANDS

This week, simply take time to reflect on the God who loved you and chose you before the creation of the world. So many people, especially around the holidays, need reminders that they too are loved more than can possibly imagine. Take a moment to pray and ask God to reveal to you one person in your life that He knows needs a reminder this week that they are

loved, then, do something tangible to share God's love for them in a practical way (a card, a coffee, some flowers, a phone call, etc...)

LIVING WORDS FOR YOUR WEEK

12 Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. **13** Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

I Corinthians 13:12-13, NLT

CHRISTMAS CAROL - WEEK 2

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

INTRODUCTION

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OPEN QUESTIONS

Among all the holiday craziness, what are some ways that you seek to put Christ at the center of your Christmas celebrations?

HEAD

1. Read Galatians 4:4, Romans 5:6-8, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2:1-19 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading.
2. Why do you think Jesus came to earth when he did?
3. In Romans 5, it says that someone may possibly die for someone who is especially good. Why is this verse so important in understanding both our need for Christ, and his love for us?
4. Wouldn't it have been easier for Jesus to come when there was a leadership vacuum in the world, with no superpowers of any kind? Why come when the Roman Empire was in charge?
5. So many missed the coming of the Messiah even though they were "looking." How did they miss it and how do we avoid doing the same thing when it comes to seeing where Jesus is at work?
6. Worship even when we don't understand is so important. Share with the group some of the ways that help you worship, even when it's hard.

HEART

1. Waiting for God to show up is so hard. How do you practice waiting and what helps?
2. What is one of your favorite parts of the birth story and why?
3. What do you think helped Jesus resist temptation and the attacks of the devil time and time again, and what can we learn from him that may help us?
4. Have you had an encounter with the resurrected Lord? If so, and you're willing to share, please do?
5. What does it mean to you that the God of the universe wants to partner with you, to help others know just how much he loves them?

HANDS

This week, spend time reflecting on the birth, the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus. Even listen to Scripture being read that covers those stories. Write out what you are grateful to God for as it relates to these stories, and then use that feeling of gratitude to simply show someone in your circle of influence God's love for them in some tangible way. Maybe it's a random act of kindness, a note of encouragement, some help with a project. But be the hands and feet of Jesus for someone who needs it, it's the best gift you could ever give.

LIVING WORDS FOR YOUR WEEK

3 I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. 4 He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. 5 He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. 6 After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.

1 Corinthians 15:3-6, NLT

CHRISTMAS CAROL - WEEK 3

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

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OPEN QUESTIONS

Share about an experience.

HEAD & HEART

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13a, 16-18 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading.
2. What does it mean to you, to your story, to know that death has been defeated?
3. Why do you think it's important to encourage one another with the words of the resurrection?
4. Do you think resurrection day will be weird at all, or will we simply recognize it because we've ready about it?
5. Read Revelation 20:1-3a, 10a together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading.
6. Have you ever been afraid of the devil? If so, how does knowing about God's power over his help you, hopefully, let go of your fear?
7. When you are scared or feeling under attack, what are some things you do to fight back?
8. Read Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, 1 Peter 1:6 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading.
9. Is it helpful to you to be reminded that your suffering is temporary, or is it too hard to believe in the midst of suffering?
10. How can we fix our gaze on things we cannot see? Practices? Approaches?
11. What are some of the joys ahead that you look forward to most?

HANDS

This week, I encourage you to take some time to work on memorizing some of the passages from this week, whether it's the ones about the resurrection, or the temporary nature of this world, whichever ones speak to you most and you feel are needed the most in your life at this time. Make them your own and remind yourself that they are your true story, and if you ever have someone around you struggle with their story, use those same verses to help remind them of what's true should they choose to believe.

LIVING WORDS FOR YOUR WEEK

*20 He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!" Amen!
Come, Lord Jesus! 21 May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people.*

Revelation 22: 20-21, NLT