**Group Session**



Small Group Study

**Leader Overview**

*Immanuel—God with us! The birth of Jesus was so much more than an important event that took place in history. It was God stepping into our world—with us and like us. God came in the form of a baby in order that we might have a relationship with Him in a more personal way.*

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| ***You Will Need***   * *Piece of paper and pen for each group of three to five students*   ***Getting Ready***   * ***First time leading* Listen *for Youth? Look here for the* Facilitator Guide*.*** |

*To access the Bible Engagement Project library from a computer, visit*[***App.BibleEngagementProject.com***](http://App.BibleEngagementProject.com)*.*

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce first-time guests, learn names, and thank everyone*

*for coming.*

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| **QUESTION**  What is something that stood out to you from your devotions this week? |

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Thank the Lord that He came to earth to bring salvation. Thank Him that He gave His life for people and that everyone who calls on His name will be saved for all eternity. Pray for everyone present and their families. Pray for the schools represented by the students in your group as well.*

**Introduction**

Today, we’re going to discuss an event that literally changed history, as well as countless lives—including mine. The birth of Jesus means that people would have an eternal Savior to turn to for their salvation. This account is shared at the beginning of the New Testament, which comes about four hundred years following the last book in the Old Testament, Malachi.

**Did You Know?**

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| A few of the most often used titles for Jesus are *Messiah* and *Christ*. Surprisingly, both words mean the same thing—“the anointed one.” These titles emphasize that He was set apart for special service for God. The reason we have two different English words that mean the same thing is that *Messiah* is based on the Hebrew word *moshiach*, and *Christ* is based on the Greek word *christos*. |

Speaking of the word *Christ*, today’s Bible account is connected to a holiday that uses that title in the name—Christmas! Let’s do a quick activity to get us in that Christmas state of mind.

**Group Activity**

**Name That Song**

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| **You Will Need:**   * *Piece of paper and pen for each group of three to five students*   *No prep is needed for this activity.* |

Since today’s Bible story is celebrated at Christmas, we need to get in the holiday spirit.

• *Break into groups of three to five students.*

• *Give each group a piece of paper and a pen.*

I’ll give you about three minutes to write down as many Christmas song titles as you can. The winning team is the one with the most song titles listed correctly.

• *After allowing the teams to create their lists, compare lists, and determine the group with the most correct song titles. Declare a winner.*

Today, we’re going to talk about a favorite holiday of many people: Christmas. Actually, we’re going to talk about the birth of Jesus and how His birth is not just a Christmas story, but an important story for our everyday faith.

While you’re thinking about what you want for Christmas, let’s watch this video.

**Watch**



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| **QUESTION**  What did you hear in this video that you had never thought of before? |

**Consider**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

**A Baby Is Born**

Read Matthew 1:18–25.

It’s an understatement, but this was not the typical baby situation. No one here has likely received a baby announcement from an angel! But there’s a lot about this situation that was typical. Mary was a real young woman. And Jesus was really birthed into this world in that cute, tiny, human package we all are.

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| **QUESTION**  Has anyone ever seen a baby born before? What was that like? |

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| **QUESTION**  How does the Book of Matthew describe how Mary became pregnant? |

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| **QUESTION**  What are three things the angel told Joseph in Matthew 1:21? |

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| **QUESTION**  Why is this important information for everyone in the world to know? |

God chose to send His Son to be with humanity. That is pretty amazing since He’s the one through whom the entire universe was created. And the impact of His birth into this world is still making waves today.

**The Dedication of Jesus**

Read Luke 2:25–33.

Maybe you’ve seen parents bring a baby in church to dedicate his or her life to God. Religious ceremonies for babies are nothing new. In the verses we just read, Jesus was brought to the temple for the Jewish religious requirements. Simeon was there that day as well, but it was certainly no accident.

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| **QUESTION**  What did these Scriptures say about Simeon? |

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| **QUESTION**  Why was Simeon at the temple that day? |

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| **QUESTION**  What did Simeon say about Jesus? |

Simeon’s encounter with Jesus was the miraculous fulfillment of a promise the Holy Spirit had made to him. This was just one of many incredible things that happened connected to the birth of Jesus.

**Reflect**

**Born of a Virgin**

Earlier, we read in Matthew about the miraculous reality that Mary was still a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**  Does anyone know what was significant about Jesus being born to a virgin woman? |

Jesus’ birth fulfills a prophecy from the Old Testament (Isaiah 7:14). It also shows us that Jesus is indeed God’s Son. Though Joseph became an adoptive, earthly father for Jesus, His Heavenly Father was divine.

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| **QUESTION**  Does anyone remember or know what Immanuel means? (God with us) |

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| **QUESTION**  What do you think “God with us” means? |

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| **QUESTION**  How would you describe the purpose of Jesus coming to earth? |

**The Serpent and the Son**

Read Genesis 3:14–15.

You may remember these verses when we talked about Adam and Eve after they sinned. God said this to the serpent after he tempted Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

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| **QUESTION**  What did God say to the serpent in these verses? |

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| **QUESTION**  Does anyone have an idea of what this means to us? |

Verse 15 lets us know that God had a plan of salvation in place following the fall of man. This verse is understood as a prophecy about Jesus, the eventual descendant of Eve, overcoming “that old serpent” (Revelation 20:2), the devil. Long before Jesus was born into this world as a baby, God already knew He would send His Son to die for the sins of people.

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| **QUESTION**  What does this say about God’s love for people? |

**God with Me**

The account of Jesus’ birth echoes over and over the message that God wants to be near to us. But some days, the challenges of life conflict with that message.

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| **QUESTION**  Do you ever feel like God is not with you? Why do you think you feel this at times? |

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| **QUESTION**  How can it be helpful to remember that God is with you when going through struggles? |

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| **QUESTION**  What is an area of your life where you especially need to know God is with you? |

* *Anticipate opportunity for ministry at this point.*

**Digging Deeper (Optional)**

**Wrapped Snugly**

Read Luke 2:11–12.

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| **QUESTION**  Have you ever held a baby? What is holding a baby like? |

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| **QUESTION**  Why do you think God came to the earth in the form of a baby? |

*(Spend some time considering the fact that God chose to put Himself into man’s hands.)*

Take a moment to think about this: Humans had to take care of the needs of God. Baby Jesus needed to be fed, cleaned up after making messes, and probably even needed comforting at times. Just as God put Himself into the hands of humanity as a baby, He also put Himself into the hands of humanity to accomplish the mission of the Cross. This shows the depth of God’s love for us.

**He Gets Us**

Read Hebrews 4:14–16.

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| **QUESTION**  Why was it important that God came in the form of a human? |

Because Jesus experienced life as we do, enduring all of the challenges, temptations, and needs that we experience daily, He empathizes with us. He really understands the challenges we go through! As a result, when we go to Him, we can be absolutely confident He really gets it. We can be bold and confident, knowing that He will give mercy and grace when we need it most.

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| **QUESTION**  How might Jesus never sinning in spite of being tempted give us hope? |

**Activate**

*Take time this week to read through the five personal devotions. They’re an introduction to the New Testament and Jesus. It will provide a good backdrop for the next several gatherings.*

**Conclusion**

God loves us so much that He sent His Son. He wants us to have a personal relationship with Him. It’s through His Son that He extends to us His mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

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| **Salvation Opportunity**  *Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*  I want to give those who may have never completely put their trust in God a chance to receive Jesus as your personal Savior.  God sent Jesus to save us because He loves us. He knows everything about us, including the choices we’ve made in life. Yet, He still wants to be a part of our life and lead us toward the amazing future He created for us.  **Is there anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?**  *Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them now or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

In a moment, we will close in prayer. As we do, let’s also pray for the individuals who surrendered their lives to Jesus.

**Prayer**

Eternal Father, I thank You for each student present and for the time together to study Your Word. Thank You for sending us Your Son, Jesus. Help us over the next several weeks to know more about Jesus and grow in our relationship with Him. Amen.

Next time we’ll discuss the story of a woman who reached out to Jesus and was miraculously healed. This incredible story will show us that truly nothing is impossible for God.