

12-24-25 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: A Promise Coming

Christmas Eve Service - Next Gen

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by thanking God for His indescribable gift and asking the Holy Spirit to open hearts and minds during your discussion.

Icebreaker

Share about a gift you received that didn't look impressive on the outside but meant everything to you. What made it special?

Sermon Overview

This Christmas Eve service explored the theme of God's greatest gift—Jesus Christ—through the lens of promises, expectation, birth, and the call to receive and share this gift with others.

Key Scriptures

Isaiah 9:2-7 (Prophecy of the Messiah)

Luke 1:26-38 (The Annunciation)

Luke 2:1-20 (The Birth of Jesus)

John 3:16-18 (God's Love for the World)

2 Corinthians 9:15 (God's Indescribable Gift)

Discussion Questions

Part 1: The Promise (Old Testament Prophecies)

The sermon mentioned that God's people waited through 39 books, 929 chapters, and 23,145 verses before Jesus came. How does understanding this long wait change your perspective on God's timing in your own life?

"God's delays are not God's denials." Share a time when you experienced God's perfect timing, even though you had to wait longer than you wanted.

From Genesis 3:15 onward, God was preparing His people for the Messiah. What does this tell us about God's character and His commitment to His promises?

Part 2: The Expectation (Mary's "Yes")

Mary responded to God's call with "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." What made her response so extraordinary? What can we learn from her willingness?

The sermon asked: "Have you ever been asked to step into something that felt bigger than you?" Share about a time God called you to something that required faith beyond your understanding.

Mary wasn't chosen because she had all the answers—she was chosen because she was willing. How does this encourage you in your current season of life?

Part 3: The Birth (Unexpected Wrapping)

Jesus came wrapped in swaddling cloths and placed in a manger—not the way we would expect God's greatest gift to arrive. Why do you think God chose simplicity and humility for Jesus's birth?

The sermon said, "If we had walked past that stable, we probably wouldn't have stopped. Nothing about it looked impressive." How do we sometimes overlook God's work in our lives because it doesn't look the way we expected?

The shepherds—ordinary people working their night shift—were the first to receive the announcement. What does this tell us about who God's gift is for?

Part 4: The Gift (Grace, Presence, and Eternal Life)

The Gift of Grace: Discuss the illustration of finding an unexpected gift card

with a note saying "just because you're loved." When have you experienced God's grace in an unexpected way?

The Gift of Presence: Tim shared about breaking down during "Grace Like Rain" and someone coming to sit with him. How has someone's physical presence made God's presence more real to you?

The Gift of Eternal Life: The sermon compared outdated video games to modern ones, noting that some things don't age well—but Jesus's gift never goes out of style. How does this truth impact how you view other things you pursue in life?

Part 5: Opening the Gift

The sermon ended with a powerful image: leaving beautifully wrapped presents under the tree, never to be opened. In what ways might we admire Jesus from a distance without actually receiving Him into our hearts and lives?

John challenged us: "Are you going to share your toys with others as you go out?" How can we practically share the gift of Jesus with others in our daily lives?

"If I come here and I just interact on Sunday morning and I leave it here and don't integrate with it in my day-to-day, I do not have the joy that is fulfilled." What are some practical ways you can "play with" or engage with your faith throughout the week?

Key Takeaways

God keeps His promises – Even when the wait seems impossibly long, God's timing is perfect.

God chooses the willing, not the qualified – Like Mary, we don't need all the answers; we just need to say "yes."

God's greatest gifts often come in unexpected packaging – Jesus came humbly so everyone could approach Him.

Grace is an unearned, undeserved, freely given gift – We can't earn it; we can only receive it.

Presence is one of the greatest gifts – God came near to us, and we're called to be present for others.

The gift must be opened, not just admired – We must receive Jesus into our lives and integrate Him into our daily walk.

Joy comes from God's presence, not perfect circumstances – Joy and sorrow can coexist when we're anchored in God's promises.

Practical Applications

This Week:

Daily Reflection: Each day, read one of the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus mentioned in the sermon. Thank God for His faithfulness in keeping His promises.

Practice Presence: Identify someone in your life who needs the gift of your presence. Make time to sit with them, listen to them, and remind them they're not alone.

Open the Gift: If you've been admiring Jesus from a distance, take time this week to truly invite Him into your life. If you've already received Him, identify one area where you've been keeping Him at arm's length and surrender it to Him.

Share the Gift: Plan one specific way you'll share the good news of Jesus with someone this week—through words, actions, or service.

Long-term:

Develop a "Yes" Posture: Like Mary, cultivate a willingness to say "yes" to God, even when you don't understand the full picture.

Create Space for Joy: Establish rhythms in your life that keep you connected to God's presence daily, not just on Sundays.

Be the Wrapping: Remember that God often uses ordinary people in ordinary settings to deliver His extraordinary gifts. Be willing to be used by God, even when it doesn't look impressive.

Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 9:15 (Amplified Bible) "Now thanks be to God for His indescribable gift, which is precious beyond words."

Closing Reflection

Take 2-3 minutes of silence for personal reflection:

Is there an area of your life where you're still waiting on God? How can you trust Him in the waiting?

Have you truly "opened" the gift of Jesus, or are you just admiring it from a distance?

Who is God calling you to share His gift with?

Closing Prayer

Have someone close in prayer, thanking God for His indescribable gift and asking for courage to receive it fully and share it generously with others.

Additional Resources

Read through the Old Testament prophecies mentioned in the sermon and see how they were fulfilled in Jesus

Listen to "Grace Like Rain" and "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" as worship this week

Journal about what it means to you personally that God came near—Emmanuel, God with us

"The gift of grace, mercy shown. The gift of presence, not alone. The gift of love, held tight. The gift of discernment, guiding light. The gift of peace, heart content. The gift of life, live sent."