

EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS FAITH

ABOUT THIS WEEK

In today's group discussion, your group will discover how faith is the first thing they need to *Experience Christmas*.

ITEMS NEEDED

- Prayer Journal
- Bibles

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- Pray for the meeting
- Print & Read Discussion Guide
- Clean meeting room
- Clean bathroom
- Refreshments (Optional)
- Front door cracked open

OPENING (5-7 MIN)

Briefly welcome everyone and say: To get started today, let's go around and answer–

WHAT IS THE FIRST CHRISTMAS “THING” YOU DO EACH YEAR?

Say: In today's group discussion, we will discover how faith is the first thing we need to *Experience Christmas*.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Say: Before we get going, can someone start us off with a brief prayer for our time together?

ZECHARIAH'S QUESTION (10-15 MIN)

After the prayer say: I'm sure, if you look back on the year, there are a few disappointments you went through that rocked your faith. In the same way, a man named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth had their faith tested.

COULD SOMEONE READ LUKE 1:5-7 FOR US?

After the reading say: As we heard on Sunday, God sent an angel to Zechariah to tell him he and Elizabeth would have a son soon. Unfortunately, Zechariah doubted the angel's message.

COULD SOMEONE READ LUKE 1:18 FOR US?

HOW DO YOU SEE DOUBT, OR LITTLE FAITH, IN ZECHARIAH'S QUESTION?

After a discussion, say: Because of his question, Zechariah was not allowed to speak until his son was born. But I'm sure the questions continued to race through his mind.

WHAT SORT OF QUESTIONS DO YOU THINK ZECHARIAH HAD DURING HIS SILENCE?

IF YOU'RE COMFORTABLE SHARING, WHAT SORT OF QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR GOD BECAUSE OF SETBACKS YOU'VE GONE THROUGH RECENTLY?

ZECHARIAH'S PRAISE (15-20 MIN)

Say: After his son was born, Zechariah's response to God's promise was filled with faith. As a matter of fact his response was recorded by Luke and is called "Zechariah's Song."

WOULD SOMEONE READ LUKE 1:76-79 FOR US?

AS YOU HEARD THAT, WHAT PHRASE STOOD OUT TO YOU AND WHY?

AS A WHOLE, DID YOU NOTICE ANY OBSERVABLE CHANGE IN ZECHARIAH'S FAITH?

After the passage is read say: With the birth of John, God's promise to Zechariah became fact. And one day, every promise of God will one day become a fact. And, in a sense, faith and hope will no longer be necessary because all things will be good!

DO YOU HAVE UPCOMING DECISIONS THAT REQUIRE A STEP OF FAITH?

HOW DOES KNOWING THAT GOD ALWAYS KEEPS HIS PROMISES CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE?

ANNOUNCEMENTS (2 MIN)

Say: There are a pair of announcements to share today:

- Our Christmas Prayer Service will be on Thursday, December 7th. (Note it is on a Thursday instead of Wednesday.)
- December 24th & 31st there will be no Kids' Ministry but there will be activities for kids during the service and Activity Kits available. Kids' Ministry will resume on January 7th.

CLOSING PRAYER (5-7 MIN)

Say: If you would like to share any upcoming decisions in your life that require a step of faith, please include those in today's prayer requests.

ARE THERE ANY PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?

[Please write them in your group prayer journal.]

After people share, say: I'll start the prayer and we will go to my left. I will also finish the prayer with the other specific prayer requests.