

## EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS COMFORT

### ABOUT THIS WEEK

As we wrap up our series, *Experience Christmas*, your group will discover how Christmas brings you a very real comfort in times of pain.

#### 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 share:

#### WHAT DID YOU END UP DOING FOR CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY?

*Say:* Every Christmas is full of joy and activity, but every Christmas also has a tinge of sadness. Maybe it's sadness because of what gift you didn't get, or sadness because of what you couldn't afford, or sadness because of who wasn't there this year. Today, we're going to talk about the very real comfort that's available to us in every season because of Christmas.

### OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

*Say:* But first, can someone start us off with a brief prayer for our time together?

### COMFORT FOR SIMEON AND ANNA (20 MIN)

*After the prayer say:* Can everyone turn to Luke 2 and we're going to read this in sections.

#### CAN SOMEONE READ LUKE 2:22-24 FOR US?

*After the reading, say:* So, 40 days after the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph offer a sacrifice at the temple for his birth. Interesting note, since Mary and Joseph were poor, they were allowed to offer two doves for a sacrifice because they couldn't afford a lamb. But while they're at the temple, two interesting events happen. First with a man named Simeon—

#### CAN SOMEONE READ VERSES 25-28 FOR US?

#### WHAT DO WE SEE THE HOLY SPIRIT DOING IN THIS SECTION?

#### LET'S SEE WHAT SIMEON SAYS. CAN SOMEONE READ VERSES 29-32 FOR US?

**SIMEON TALKS ABOUT “DEPARTING IN PEACE”. WHAT MIGHT BE THE SORROW HE FEELS?**

*Host:* Simeon has sorrow about his old age and nearing death, but the text also suggests Simeon’s waiting for the rescue of Israel.

**SO HOW DOES JESUS BRING SIMEON COMFORT TO THESE SORROWS WE MENTIONED?**

*After discussion say:* There’s more comfort and sorrow to consider that day in the temple.

**CAN SOMEONE READ VERSES 33-40 FOR US?**

**WHAT SORROW DOES ANNA FEEL?**

**SAME QUESTION, DIFFERENT PERSON— SO HOW DOES JESUS BRING ANNA COMFORT TO THESE SORROWS WE MENTIONED?**

**COMFORT FOR US (15-20 MIN)**

*After a discussion, say:* It’s one thing for Jesus to bring Simeon and Anna comfort to their unique sorrows, it’s another thing for Jesus to bring comfort for you and I. There are a lot of Bible verses that talk about the very real comfort Jesus gives us in various situations. But the comfort God gives typically falls into one of three categories: His people, his promises, and his presence. Let’s briefly consider all three:

**GOD COMFORTS US WITH HIS PEOPLE. CAN SOMEONE READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-7?**

**HOW DOES A PERSON BRING YOU COMFORT? HOW DOES THAT CHANGE WHEN THAT PERSON IS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS?**

**GOD COMFORTS US WITH HIS PROMISES. CAN SOMEONE READ PSALM 119:50?**

**HOW MIGHT A PROMISE SOMEONE MAKES BRING YOU COMFORT?**

**HOW DOES IT CHANGE THINGS IF THAT SOMEONE IS GOD?**

**FINALLY, GOD COMFORTS US WITH HIS PRESENCE. CAN SOMEONE READ PSALM 16:11?**

**HOW DOES SOMEONE’S PRESENCE BRING YOU COMFORT?**

**HOW DOES IT CHANGE THINGS IF THAT SOMEONE IS GOD?**

*After a discussion, say:* This understanding of comfort with God’s people, God’s presence, and God’s promises is not only on display in the story of Anna and Simeon, but is available to each of us now.

**WHAT TYPE OF COMFORT DO YOU NEED FROM GOD RIGHT NOW—HIS PEOPLE, HIS PROMISES, OR HIS PRESENCE?**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS (2 MIN)

*After a discussion, say:* A couple quick announcements before we jump to our prayer requests this week:

- There is a Prayer Night on Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is a great chance to start the new year off right!
- Then, don't miss next Sunday in worship as we start a new series to discover who God made you to be called *SHAPE*.
- A reminder that Kids' Ministry starts back up on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

## CLOSING PRAYER (5-7 MIN)

*After the announcements, say:* Are there any prayer requests today? [Write the prayer requests in your group prayer journal.]

*After writing prayer requests, say:* Let's pray about today's topic and each of these prayer requests. Can I get a volunteer to close us in prayer today?