

WEEK 1: COMFORT IN EVERY SEASON

ABOUT THIS SERIES

In our December series *Comfort and Joy*, your group will look at how the birth of Jesus brings a comfort and joy that lasts long after the tree comes down.

ITEMS NEEDED

- Bibles Pens

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- Pray for your group Read through the Discussion Guide Refreshments (optional)
 Clean meeting area Clean bathroom Crack front door

OPENING (10-12 MIN)

After a general welcome, say: Merry Christmas, everyone! It may not be Christmas just yet, but the season is here.

WHAT'S ONE CHRISTMAS TRADITION YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MOST?

After a brief discussion, say: In our series *Comfort and Joy* we're going to discover how Jesus brings us a comfort and joy that lasts long after the Christmas tree comes down. We start with week one, and consider the comfort Jesus brings regardless of the season of life you find yourself in.

Before we get started, will you please pray with me?

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Host, lead the group in prayer.

EVERY SEASON (APX. 7-10 MIN)

After a prayer, say: Christmas is filled with all sorts of comforts—warm fires, the smell of evergreen, sugar cookies, Christmas lights. Each one designed to brighten the cold, gray, and dark days of winter. These are great things, and we should enjoy them.

REAL QUICK—WHAT CHRISTMAS TRAPPING BRINGS YOU THE MOST COMFORT?

After a discussion, say: But the problem is, after the calendar turns to January and the decorations in the store come down, we find ourselves right back in the season of life that we're in.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THIS SEASON OF LIFE YOU'RE CURRENTLY IN?

WHAT ARE SOME UNIQUE JOYS AND SOME UNIQUE CHALLENGES IN YOUR PARTICULAR SEASON OF LIFE?

EVER PRESENT COMFORT (APX. 10-12 MIN)

After a discussion, say: At its heart, the Christmas story is one of God bringing comfort to all people.

CAN SOMEONE READ ISAIAH 40:1-2 ALOUD FOR US?

If you notice, it doesn't say "Comfort, comfort, my wealthy people." And it doesn't say "Comfort, comfort, my beautiful people." It says "Comfort, comfort, my people." As in, any and all of God's people.

DESCRIBE YOUR EMOTIONS IF THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE SAID THE FOLLOWING:

"BEWARE, BEWARE MY PEOPLE, I'M OUT TO GET YOU"

"FIGHT BACK, FIGHT BACK MY PEOPLE, EVERYONE ELSE IS OUT TO GET YOU"

WITH THAT THOUGHT IN MIND, HOW DOES IT BRING COMFORT THAT THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE SEES US?

After the reading, say: But the comfort we have is not just a comfort that God sees us.

CAN SOMEONE READ MATTHEW 1:20-21 ALOUD FOR US?

After the reading, say: When Matthew writes his biography of Jesus he notes that when Jesus is born, he is *Immanuel*, which means *God with us*.

CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME WHERE SOMEONE JUST BEING WITH YOU BROUGHT YOU COMFORT WHILE YOU WERE IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION?**WHAT IS IT ABOUT SOMEONE'S PRESENCE THAT COMFORTS US?****SO, LET'S TRANSLATE THIS TO GOD—HOW DOES GOD BEING WITH US BRING US REAL, HONEST TO GOODNESS, COMFORT?**

After a discussion, say: May we all experience this comfort of the birth of Jesus in a deeper way this year.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT AND PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

After a discussion, say: One of the ways you can bring comfort to others this Christmas season is to invite them to church where they can experience the comfort of Jesus for themselves.

WHO IS SOMEONE YOU'D LIKE TO INVITE TO CHRISTMAS EVE THAT WE CAN PRAY THAT THEY WOULD COME WITH YOU?**ARE THERE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS?**

Host, after taking prayer requests, close out the group in prayer.