

## WEEK 2: COMFORT FOR THE UNPREPARED

### ABOUT THIS SERIES

In our December series *Comfort and Joy*, your group will discover 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:* As Christmas gets a bit closer we start to think more and more about what we haven't done yet.

### WITH CHRISTMAS COMING SOON, WHAT DO YOU STILL NEED TO DO?

*After a brief discussion, say:* We're in a series called *Comfort and Joy* so you can experience just that. But how do you experience comfort when there's still so much to do? Well, first, I'm hear to bring you the good news that you can't do it all. There are way more Christmas things you can fit in your calendar than there are days. So right away, relax. You're doing the best you can.

Second, there's actually great comfort for the unprepared in the Christmas story.

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

### OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

*Host, lead the group in prayer.*

### CHRIST'S FIRST COMING (10-12 MIN)

*After a prayer, say:* Like we heard on Sunday, the angel Gabriel visited Mary with an important message.

**CAN EVERYONE TURN TO LUKE 1:26-38? IT'S A BIT OF A LONGER READING, SO LET'S GO IN A CIRCLE AND EACH TAKE A TURN READING A VERSE.**

### WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU IN THIS READING?

*After a discussion, say:* If you notice, the angel focuses on what will happen in the future. So Mary's job is to get ready and prepare.

**WHAT SORT OF THINGS DO YOU THINK MARY HAD TO DO TO GET READY FOR THE BIRTH OF JESUS?**

*After a discussion, say:* The theme of the announcement to Mary is: *God is coming. There's still time. Get ready.* For Mary, remembering there's still time brings her great comfort even though she isn't prepared.

### CHRIST'S FIRST COMING (10-12 MIN)

To identify with Mary's feeling of looking forward to Christ's arrival, for thousands of years the Church has used the time leading up to Christmas to not only prepare to celebrate his first coming, but to look forward to his second coming.

### **THERE ARE SEVERAL VERSES IN THE BIBLE THAT TALK ABOUT CHRIST'S RETURN, BUT CAN SOMEONE READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18 ALOUD FOR US?**

#### **WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU IN THIS READING?**

*After a discussion, say:* One of the things that inevitably happens after we read something like this is we start to what we need to do to get ready. Suddenly, we're feeling a very "Mary" Christmas feeling. *God is coming. There's still time. Get ready.*

In 2 Peter 3:14 tells us, "*Dear friends, since you are looking forward to his return, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.*" So let's flip the question we started with today.

#### **IF YOU'RE COMFORTABLE SHARING, WITH CHRIST COMING SOON, WHAT DO YOU STILL NEED TO DO?**

*After a discussion, say:* Whatever emotions you're feeling right now, you can find the same comfort Mary felt even though she wasn't ready: *God is coming. There's still time. Get ready.* In other words, take comfort in God's patience.

### 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.*