

The Gospel of Matthew
Week 2: The Birth of Jesus Christ
Matthew 1:1-18-25

Ice Breaker

Option 1

Spend a few minutes catching up on your growth as a disciple this past week. What did you learn about Jesus? How are you seeing Him more clearly? How are you responding in light of how you see Him? How did you do with your personal action steps from last week? Which step did you choose? Meet with someone from the group? What worked? What kept you from taking steps?

Option 2

What is your favorite Christmas tradition? Are there any new traditions you've started?

Discover— Seeing the truth about God and committing to learn (Head)

Read Matthew 1:18-25. For the Old Testament reference read Isaiah 7:14.

1. What stands out to you about the passage? What particular words or passages make you think or challenge you?
2. How would you describe Joseph's situation? What is his ancestry? What are his choices? What do you think of his decision making process?
3. What is Joseph instructed to do?
4. What is the significance of the names "Jesus" and "Immanuel"? What do they mean?
5. Read Isaiah 7:14. How is this fulfilled?
6. What does Joseph ultimately do? How is he rewarded for his actions?

Nurture— Seeing the truth about myself and committing to change (Heart)

1. Last week we were challenged through the genealogy to consider the question: "What name will you live by"? As we look at the birth story through the lens of Joseph, the one who was literally given the authority to name Jesus, how is God challenging you to think about your own identity as a follower of Jesus? Is Jesus closer to the center or more on the margins of how you define yourself? Which direction are you heading? How can the group help you think about this and encourage you?
2. Respond to the statement: "Worship is the most practical thing you can do as a disciple." Do you agree with this statement? Why? As you continue to "consider" Jesus, are you filled with awe and wonder? Are you cold, indifferent, skeptical, or angry? Are you following a culture that minimizes Jesus and puts him in the same room with Santa and our other traditions? As you consider the virgin birth, the very idea that the God of the universe took on human flesh and would die for you, that he would offer forgiveness for your sins, is your heart stirred to worship? If so, share with the group how God might be reordering your

loves, your priorities. If not, share with the group the obstacles you are facing in the process.

3. The names “Jesus” and “Immanuel,” Matthew emphasizes, are important. God saves us. God is with us. To what extent are these theological statements clear and important to you personally? What questions do you have? How do they affect your daily life, your decisions, your prayers? How can the group help you apply the truths about the birth of Jesus?

4. Continue to think about your discipleship journey.

Think about each of the following potential steps:

- Deeper commitment to your small group as you look to your 2020 plan
- Forming a DNA group with others in your group or outside your group
- Signing up for a class in January
- Volunteering to teach kids or serve on another ministry team
- Giving more generously with your finances
- Other

How can the group encourage you to take that next step?

As you hear about all the “how to” steps you can take, consider for a moment the “why” behind your plans. What is your primary motivation? What are some of the others pursuits—even good ones—that may be taking some of the time and energy you need to devote to making disciples who make disciples? What might you need to eliminate from your weekly schedule to devote more time to prayer, Bible study, community, and rest? How can the group help you find more margin to grow as a disciple?

Action—Seeing the truth and responding in a tangible way (Hands)

1. What is the next right thing the Holy Spirit is leading you to do this week?
2. Who is the Holy Spirit leading you to tell?
3. How can the group pray for and encourage you this week?