

Dig Deeper @Home – “Awe and Wonder”

Complement to lesson on 12/4/22 – “Uninterested”

ICE BREAKER – Questions to open dialogue and learn more about those gathered

1. If a friend or neighbor asked you what Advent is, how would you answer?
(Hint: www.gotquestions.org/what-is-Advent.html)
2. What is your most and least favorite parts about the Christmas season?

MEMORIZE – Matthew 1:21

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

READ – Matthew 2: 1-12

Questions to ponder/discuss:

1. Re-scan the text and consider...
 - a. Did the Holy Spirit cause anything in particular to “jump off the page” as you read?
 - b. Is anything repeated? Contrasted? Compared? (If so... why might that be?)
 - c. What are the verses revealing about God? About people?
In light of these, what needs to change in your life? What are you already doing well?
2. Who are these “wise men” seeking Jesus? (Did you know Matthew 2 is the only place in Scripture they are mentioned?) What do we learn about them from these 12 verses? What things might you have believed were true about them that Scripture doesn’t ACTUALLY say?
3. How did the wise men know where to find the “king of the Jews?” Could Numbers 24:17 and Micah 5:2 be Messianic predictions they were familiar with or heard? (Take a look!)
4. A main focus of our Advent sermon series is how people respond to Jesus. Take note of how the various people in this passage respond to the news of Jesus’ birth.
How did these respond?
 - a. Herod:
 - b. Wise Men:
 - c. People of Jerusalem:
 - d. Chief Priests & Scribes:

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY – Stargazing

Pick a dark, clear night and go out to do some stargazing. As you look up at the many beautiful stars, consider these questions. (If doing this activity in a group, discuss them together!)

- 1) What might have it been like for the wise men, following a star to a prophesied King?
- 2) Note how even what looks like a small flicker of light is able to pierce the darkness! Just as the Bethlehem star announced the inbreaking light of Christ's glorious kingdom in our world, we too sometimes experience flickers (or even bright flashes!) of the light of God's kingdom. How have you experienced the light of Jesus casting out the darkness in your world recently?
- 3) Scripture tells us that Jesus is "the light of the world" (John 8:12) and "the bright morning star." (Revelation 22:16) As you gaze at the beautiful stars above, what do you think these verses mean? Does actually looking at the stars in all of their brilliance give new life to these familiar passages?

SING (Suggested songs to sing. Use these, or any favorites of the gathered group, to worship Jesus!)

From The Eastern Mountains – Mennonite Hymnal #140

How Bright Appears The Morning Star- Mennonite Hymnal #141

To Us A Child Of Hope Is Born – Mennonite Hymnal #125

O Little Town of Bethlehem – Mennonite Hymnal #133

Listen: Wolves at the Gate - O Holy Night <https://youtu.be/pgEFhPW-4Y0>

PRAY

This is a time to gather around for prayer requests and to share how you have seen God at work. A time to hear where God is showing up in our lives and where we need Him to help us in our lives.

Sending prayer based on the series:

Holy Spirit, this Advent season may I respond to Jesus with awe and wonder as I think about His love, grace and mercy that would have Him be born of flesh in order to save His people (including me) from their sins. Help me rejoice in You more and more as I treasure these things in my heart.