

Passport to Christmas

Week 2 - Passport to the Hill Country

Note: You may find the Message Podcasts & Group Guides in this series at actschurchlakeway.com.. This is all also found on the ACTS Lakeway smartphone app, available for download in the app store for your phone or tablet.

Group Connection Point

1. What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Christmas season in America? Share your word, and why.
2. Now think of the word, 'love.' Although this may not be the first concept to emerge during the month of December, most individuals and families eventually get to a place of love. Even though you may have to look harder for it, where specifically do you find love in Christmas?

Group Discussion Questions for Passport to Christmas - Week 2

1. When the angel appears to Mary in Luke 1, Mary is startled. Her first reaction is not one of 'love.' What is it? Read Luke 1:26-30. What would your reaction have been in this situation?
2. After receiving the angel's unbelievable message, Mary got out her passport (so to speak) and traveled to see her relative Elizabeth. To what region did Mary go, when she went to stay with Elizabeth? To the best of your ability, see if you can figure out how many miles Mary would have traveled from her home in Nazareth. What's the limit of how far would you travel, if you were overflowing with good news of what God was doing in your life?
3. When an angel had earlier appeared to Elizabeth's husband Zechariah, he initially did not believe (look up Luke 1:18-20). Mary was unique in that she did believe! Note how Elizabeth draws this point out in Luke 1:45.
4. How would people describe your tendency to believe in God's promises? Are you more like Mary? Or Zechariah? Explain. Use an illustration if you can think of one.
5. In this series, we are trying to help you understand the fact that God is a sending God. All through the Christmas story (in fact, all through the Scriptures), God interrupts the ordinary lives of ordinary men and women to call them, favor them, equip them, and employ them! If you had to say it in a sentence, what is the thing that Mary was 'sent' to do? After you've shared initial responses, you might look up Luke 1:31 and Matthew 1:21.
6. God is a sending God. But beyond that, God is a sent God. He himself came down to earth at Christmas! Read Matthew 1:22-23. And with this truth, we move from the 'what' and the 'where' and the 'how'... to the 'why'. WHY was it that God came to earth through the Nativity of Jesus? (Hint: you know the answer! Look up John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:3-6)

7. And suddenly we're back where we started. We're back to love. Merry Christmas. Think of a specific way that you could display this love in the opening days of December, rather than waiting until Christmas Eve. Share your ideas and pray for one another!

Individual Journaling and Reflection Questions for Passport to Christmas - Week 2

- What is some good news you've been holding onto? Who is God calling you to share it with?
- Who would you run to in a time of need? How can you reach out to them as a proactive measure to show your appreciation and support in advance of that time?
- What is a promise of God's you are struggling to believe in and trust right now? What is a prayer directly related to that?

Prayer for Passport to Christmas - Week 1

As you take time to pray in your small group or throughout the week on your own, here are some ideas and concepts which may help focus your prayers:

- Pray for the promises you are relying on from our God.
- Pray for those that God is putting in your life to support you and pray for those that you are a support for.
- Pray thanks for the gift that is to be celebrated this Christmas and the impact Christ makes on your life on a daily basis.