

# HOW TO USE THIS GROUP GUIDE

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## CONNECT (10 MINS)

- Pick one or more of the warm-up questions and have all the group members give a response to the question(s).
- Make sure everybody gets a chance to speak. Don't let talkative people dominate the conversation, but graciously welcome everybody to participate.

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## TRUTH (15-20 MIN)

- Read the scriptures and paragraphs in this section to clearly communicate... what the Bible says about the week's topic.
- **"DISCUSS" sections:** These sections get people discussing the practical implications of the truth being discussed. Have one or two people give an answer, but don't spend too much time on these questions.

## GRACE (5 MINS)

- Read the grace scripture and section which shows how the passage points to Jesus Christ and God's grace.
- This section is really important, because it shows that life change begins with the grace of God and not our own efforts.

## **CHANGE (10-15 MINS)**

- Have everyone give an answer to each of the change questions.
- Take a good amount of time here. Really encourage people to think through how they can practically put truth into action.

## **PRAYER (10-15 MINS)**

- Read through the prayer focus points and have one or two people in the group pray.
- Make sure not to rush through prayer. The things we want God to change in our lives will often happen through prayer.

*The* **BIG GIVE**

**WEEK 1**

**GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**



**ALETHEIA  
CHURCH**

# CONNECT

- ▶ What are some of your favorite Christmastime traditions?
- ▶ Describe a time when a person gave you a gift that was perfectly catered to your personality.
- ▶ What are some of the details about Jesus's birth you are most familiar with?

# TRUTH

*And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.  
(Matthew 2:11)*

We just experienced Big Give Sunday. Followers of Jesus are called to be a generous people, but the motivation for our generosity is unique. Jesus coming into the world was a far greater gift than we could ever imagine, and every time we give, it's because God gave first. In this familiar story about Jesus's birth, we discover just why and how God's giving calls disciples to give.

# The Nature of the Gift

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

*(Matthew 1:20-21)*

In Greek, Jesus is the same name as Joshua. It isn't by chance that God chose this name for the incarnate Son. Joshua was the name of the man who captained Israel during their first settlement in Canaan.

Joshua was the name of the high priest during Israel's resettlement in the land after their exile. Both Joshuas represent times of great hope in Israel's history—hopes never fully realized. In Jesus, all that changed. By saving his people from their sin, God's gift of Jesus is the fulfillment of his people's deepest hopes.

# DISCUSS

- ▶ In what ways is sin the reason for unrealized hope in the world?



# The Character of the Giver

*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). (Matthew 1:22-23)*

When somebody puts a great deal of effort, time, or money into a gift, its value goes up. In giving the gift of Jesus, God held nothing back. The fact that God joined himself eternally to a human body to save us and bring us into relationship with him tells us something about the strength of his love for us.

# Our Gift to the Giver

*After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:9-11)*

We may not know much about the wise men, but we do know that they recognized the significance of Jesus's birth. When the star they followed came to rest over the house where Mary and Jesus were, they were overjoyed. When they opened their treasures and gave

gifts to Jesus, it was to share in the joy of finding him. We give most readily to the people we cherish most in the world. That's what we see happening in the wise men.

# DISCUSS

- ▶ Describe a time when you experienced joy through giving.

# GRACE

*They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"*  
(Matthew 2:5-6)

A Savior has come to deal with our sin and bring us back into relationship with God. His birth means that God didn't abandon us, that he loves us deeply, and that putting faith in him means the realization of our deepest hopes and needs. When we give, we share in the joy of this reality.

gather a people who've never failed.  
He's looking for a people who trust  
in the death and resurrection of the  
King, and who will live their lives  
invested in the kingdom now and  
the fullness of the kingdom to come.

# CHANGE

- ▶ What have you learned from this lesson and how will you apply it to your life?
- ▶ Do you see giving as an opportunity for joy? Why or why not?
- ▶ What concerns or pressures typically keep you from generous giving? How does this passage speak to those concerns?

Pray for a vision of the value of Jesus and the immeasurable worth of his coming.



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