

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of December 6-12, 2020

## “JOSEPH’S SURPRISE”

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### GETTING STARTED

*To the facilitator: Use this section to introduce the topic. If possible, give a brief recap of the sermon.*

Share a memorable point, a spiritual lesson, a personal application, a question, or something that challenged you from the sermon last Sunday.

Describe using one word what you know of as a very interesting detail about Joseph (the father of Jesus).

### GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 1:18-25.

1. How did Matthew tell us about the human situation of Joseph and Mary? What did the phrase “Mary was found to be pregnant” suggest about the whole scenario? What about the phrase “before they came together”?
2. What was Joseph considering in regards to Mary and why would he be justified in doing this? (See Deuteronomy 24:1.) What does this say about his character? What does this teach us about how we can respond or make decisions in a godly way especially when somebody hurts us?
3. Obeying God is not always easy. From a human perspective, what would it “cost” Joseph to go ahead and marry Mary? Can you recall a time when you were certain that God was nudging you toward this kind of obedience? How did you respond? What went through your mind as you made the decision?
4. “When everything is unclear in life, simply obey what is clear.” How does Joseph’s story encourage you to cooperate with God even when he wants you to do something very difficult? What is the role of the Bible in your decision making?
5. Jesus could have appeared to people in any way he chose to. Read Hebrews 4:14-15. How is Jesus’ identity as Immanuel, God With Us, confirmed in these verses? How has this truth about who Jesus is comfort you lately?

6. What does verse 21 say about the purpose of Jesus’ incarnation? Why would this be very different from the expectations of the Jews at that time? In what way(s) do we make the same mistake by focusing on the temporal instead of the eternal? What kind of a Messiah is Jesus?

### 7. [NEXT STEPS]

*When we see the hand of God in the “surprises” of life, then we know we’re in good hands!*

- ☐ I will do the right thing even when I am wronged.
- ☐ I will cast my fears upon the Lord.
- ☐ I will hold my plans loosely before the Lord.
- ☐ I will obey God in the area of \_\_\_\_\_.

*Don’t forget to:*

- ☐ Go through the devotionals everyday this week.
- ☐ Have a regular daily time of prayer and reading of God’s Word.
- ☐ Commit 30 minutes a day for God’s intervention in this fight against the COVID virus.

### CLOSING THE SESSION.

Close the session by taking the time to pray for one another. Consider the following as you pray:

- Pray for that area in your life that God is requiring obedience from you; surrender this to him and ask for grace to submit.
- Take the time to pray for our nation, for peace and for the gospel to prosper during this time of the pandemic.
- Pray for those who are hurting, going through fear, worry and anxiety in the group.
- Pray for your unsaved family, friends and loved ones.