



## Lake Forest Church Series Discussion Questions

### Series: Exchanging Christmas

#### Part 1 of 2

#### **INTRODUCE IT**

Christmas is filled with things like traditions, expectations, and anticipation. As adults, much of this is shaped by what Christmas looked like for us when we were kids. We continue to anticipate it looking like that as we get older and looking like that for our kids.

Share as a group the traditions and/or "look and feel" of Christmas that you grew up with and still practice today. Why are those things still important to you? (These can be things like foods you ate, routine of Christmas morning, Christmas eve traditions, etc...)

#### **STUDY IT**

In the Bible, there are two common places that we hear our traditional Christmas story: Matthew 1-2 and Luke 2. Matthew tells the story with our main visitors being the Magi and Luke tells it with our main visitors being the Shepherds. In this set of questions, we will look at the story in Matthew and part 2 of our sermon questions will look at it from Luke.

But before we look at either, what do you imagine being the difference between Magi and Shepherds? In seeing the difference between these two, you learn right from the beginning of Matthew and Luke the audience they are each writing to.

#### **Read Matthew 1:18-25**

Joseph and Mary are pledged to be married and therefore they are preparing for a wedding. Name all the ways listed in these verses that their typical wedding plans were altered.

Imagine being Joseph and Mary. In what ways were their expectations and dreams of their marriage altered? In what ways would this have been very hard to embrace for each of them?

Thinking back to the introduction question, what would be the most difficult traditions or Christmas expectations for you to give up IF God were calling you to give them up for something he is doing?

#### **Read Matthew 2:1-12**

Why would the Magi have gone to King Herod first to find out where the Messiah had been born?

Like Mary and Joseph, King Herod was also surprised by this news and his plans altered. In what ways would this news have altered King Herod's dreams and plans?

What was the response of the Magi when they found the baby Jesus?

How is their response to Jesus similar to Joseph and Mary's?

### **USE IT**

As you read the rest of the story, we find that Herod had no plans to worship Jesus but to destroy him. In what ways have our culture celebrated the birth of Jesus but with no intentions of worshipping him at all? How have you seen our culture use his birth as a means of worshipping themselves? Have you fallen into these same traps and if so, which ones?

In the sermon series Exchanging Christmas, we hope to challenge you to exchange what you identify as traditions and expectations around Christmas that you have to hold onto and ways that God might be asking you to alter for the sake of his kingdom.

Our four areas we will look at are: Spend Less, Give More, Worship Fully, and Love All. In looking at these four areas, which ones do you think will be the hardest for you as we go into this series?

Are there things that have already popped into your head as you read about Mary, Joseph and the Magi that God might be challenging to you alter? Share this with the group and the reasons why they immediately popped into your head.

Pray as a group that this Christmas God would make your hearts willing to be altered in the things you expect for the sake of bringing the good news of **Jesus to others.**